

• **Sentence Completion 1** Level 12

Directions: Complete the sentence using the word or set of words for each blank that best fits the meaning of the sentence as a whole.

1. Under the _____ of their mother, the newborn kittens knew they were protected, since any predator would have to harm their mother before it could get to them.
A. aegis
B. negligence
C. truancy
D. apostasy
E. primogeniture
2. In the decade after the revolution, the new government seemed to _____ and was never quite _____; this period ultimately led to a second revolution in which the current ruling party took power.
A. careen ... ephemeral
B. fortify ... faltering
C. waver ... flimsy
D. coagulate ... tenable
E. totter ... stable
3. Despite his _____ upbringing, Vladimir proved quite adept at navigating city life.
A. urbane
B. acrid
C. bucolic
D. cosmopolitan
E. harsh
4. Macbeth received what he thought was _____ prediction from three witches, but his attempts to make the auspicious portents come true tragically failed in the end.
A. an ominous
B. a momentous
C. a lamentable
D. a sinister
E. a propitious
5. The clownfish eats organisms that could potentially harm the sea anemone, while the anemone provides the clownfish with a safe shelter; both organisms benefit from this _____ relationship.
A. docile
B. disjointed
C. amenable
D. symbiotic
E. contrary
6. Because the boy had told so many _____ tales about seeing wolves, none of the villagers believed him when he actually did see a wolf.
A. fallacious
B. verifiable
C. scrupulous
D. fictitious
E. concrete

Answers and Explanations

1) A

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using keywords from the prompt. Here, the keywords are in the phrase “any predator would have to harm their mother before it could get to them,” a phrase that is used to explain why the kittens felt protected. The missing word is also part of a phrase that explains why the kittens felt protected, so it must have similar meaning. Thus, the missing word must be one that implies the mother is protecting her young. Because *aegis* is protection or support, choice **(A)** is correct.

(B) is incorrect because *negligence* is the act of not caring for something or someone properly. As such, this word has the opposite meaning of the missing word, since the missing word should imply that the kittens were protected by the mother.

(C) is incorrect because *truancy* is the act of shirking or neglecting one’s duties. As such, this word has the opposite meaning of the missing word, since the missing word should imply that the kittens were protected by the mother.

(D) is incorrect because *apostasy* is a departure of one’s principles or religious beliefs. Cats don’t have principles or beliefs, so they cannot engage in apostasy.

(E) is incorrect because *primogeniture* is the inheritance of wealth by the eldest child in a family. The prompt does not imply that the mother cat only helps her oldest kitten; she helps and protects all her kittens. Furthermore, cats do not pass on wealth from generation to generation as humans do.

2) E

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using keywords from the prompt. Here, the only keywords are those between the missing words, the phrase “and was never quite.” This phrase sets up the two missing words as opposites of each other. For more specific clues to help predict the meaning of these words, the prompt provides evidence that this government did not last, leading “to a second revolution.” Therefore, the missing words must relate to a lack of stability or permanence of the government. The first word must mean impermanent, while the second must permanence. *Totter* means to sway as if about to fall, while *stable* means steady and constant. Together, these words suggest that the government seemed to sway and was never quite steady, leading to a second revolution. This makes logical sense, so choice **(E)** is correct.

(A) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Careen* means to lean or sway. This could describe what the new government seemed to do. However, *ephemeral* means brief, which accurately describes the new government, but does not work after the modifier “never.” If the government were *not* ephemeral, then it would have lasted longer than a decade before being overthrown.

(B) is incorrect because neither word works in context. *Fortify* means to make something stronger, while *faltering* means stumbling. These words would work in the opposite order but not in the given order.

(C) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Waver* means to sway or shift, which could describe what the “new government” did. However, *flimsy* means without strength or solidity, and the new government would not be described as “never flimsy.”

(D) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. *Coagulate* means to harden, though the prompt implies that “the new government” never became strong. However, *tenable* means able to be held or defended, so this word correctly describes a characteristic that the “new government” never had.

3) C

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using keywords from the prompt. Here, the keywords are found in the phrase “quite adept at navigating city life,” which is used to describe Vladimir. The prompt implies that this ability is surprising, since the prompt hinges on the word “despite.” This word sets up a contrasting relationship. Thus, the missing word must mean the opposite of city life, implying that Vladimir’s upbringing was rural, not urban. Therefore, choice **(C)** is correct, since *bucolic* means idyllic or rural.

(A) is incorrect because *urbane* means suave or sophisticated. This word can be associated with city life, so it would not make sense to say Vladimir was “adept at navigating city life” “despite” such an upbringing.

(B) is incorrect because *acid* means sharp or bitter. There is not enough evidence in the prompt to suggest that Vladimir had a rough or hard upbringing. The prompt merely suggests that he did not grow up in a city.

(D) is incorrect because *cosmopolitan* means worldly or not given to provincial tastes or prejudices. In other words, it would describe Vladimir’s later life but not his upbringing.

(E) is incorrect because *harsh* means grimly unpleasant or severe. There is not enough evidence in the prompt to suggest that Vladimir had a rough or hard upbringing. The prompt merely suggests that he did not grow up in a city.

4) E

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using keywords from the prompt. The keyword in this sentence is “auspicious,” an adjective that, like the missing word, describes the predictions or portents as lucky or promising. Thus, the missing word must likewise mean auspicious. Therefore, choice **(E)** is correct: *propitious* means full of promise.

(A) is incorrect because *ominous* means portending evil or harm, the very opposite of predictions that are described as “auspicious.”

(B) is incorrect because *momentous* means of great importance. The predictions might have been extremely important, but the prompt does not give enough information to support this idea. The prompt only makes it clear that the “auspicious” predictions ultimately “failed.”

(C) is incorrect because *lamentable* means regrettable. However, the missing word describes the predictions, not the tragic outcome of Macbeth’s actions. Macbeth’s reality could be described as lamentable, but the predictions themselves were the opposite.

(D) is incorrect because *sinister* means evil. This is the opposite of predictions that are described as “auspicious.”

5) D

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using keywords from the prompt. Here, the keywords are “both organisms benefit.” The related independent clause before the semicolon explains how the clownfish and the sea anemone help each other survive, so the missing word must refer to the mutually beneficial relationship between these two creatures. Because *symbiotic* means interdependent, choice **(D)** is correct.

(A) is incorrect because *docile* means easily managed or trained. This word could imply that the clownfish and sea anemone can easily inhabit the same space, but it does not give a strong enough meaning to accurately describe the fact that both organisms depend on each other.

(B) is incorrect because *disjointed* means disconnected or incoherent. This word describes the very opposite of the interdependent, mutually beneficial relationship that the prompt describes.

(C) is incorrect because *amenable* means ready or able to agree. While the prompt makes it clear the anemone and the clownfish get along, this word is not strong enough in meaning to work for the missing word. The prompt suggests that the organisms do not merely get along; they need each other to survive.

(E) is incorrect because *contrary* means determined to be contrasting. This word describes the very opposite of the relationship the prompt describes, as that relationship is mutually beneficial.

6) D

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using keywords from the prompt. Here, the keyword is “actually,” which describes a claim the boy made that was contrary to his usual stories. The missing word must mean untrue or false, since then it would be a surprise to find him telling a story about “actually” seeing a wolf. Since *fictional* means made up or unreal, choice **(D)** is correct.

(A) is incorrect because *fallacious* means deceptive or misleading. While this could work in context for the missing word, the prompt only implies that the boy’s stories were imagined, not that they were intentionally deceptive. There is, thus, not enough information given in the prompt to support this choice.

(B) is incorrect because *verifiable* means able to be confirmed. As such, this does not work in context. This word would imply that the boy’s usual tales were rooted in reality.

(C) is incorrect because *scrupulous* means principled. This word would not describe either the boy or his tales, as his tales are apparently not rooted in reality.

(E) is incorrect because *concrete* means real, the exact opposite of the boy’s usual tales. If the boy’s tales were typically authentic, the villagers would be more likely to believe them.