



● Sentence Completion 1 *(low-advanced SAT level)*

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

1. My grandmother never tried to hide her prejudices. Unfortunately, she was always a **blatant** racist.
A. blatant
B. bitter
C. tolerant
D. covert
E. subtle
2. My physics professor gets off topic very easily. She spent most of today's lesson on a completely unrelated _____ about her favorite TV show.
A. monologue
B. tangent
C. diatribe
D. discussion
E. lecture
3. I fell off my bicycle and landed on some sharp broken glass. As a result, I now have several _____.
A. lacerations
B. analgesics
C. surgeries
D. contusions
E. aches
4. The governor refused to give the criminal _____; he faces execution tomorrow morning.
A. a trial
B. an appeal
C. a sentence
D. a reprieve
E. a hearing
5. The city remained _____ for years after the hurricane's destruction. Efforts to rebuild were largely _____.
A. blighted ... successful
B. underwater ... effective
C. barren ... isolated
D. robust ... wasteful
E. desolate ... abortive
6. Until the police were finally able to _____ it, the security camera's footage was blurry and inconclusive. They later used the images to _____ the criminal.
A. enhance ... identify
B. review ... arrest
C. manipulate ... release
D. watch ... capture
E. sharpen ... exonerate
7. The outspoken atheist is a harsh critic of religion. His comments seem like _____ to many faithful believers.
A. beatitudes
B. worship
C. liturgy
D. dogma
E. blasphemy
8. _____ clearly when giving a speech. You will be misunderstood if you slur your speech or _____.
A. Pontificate ... whisper
B. Enunciate ... mumble
C. Speak ... articulate
D. Murmur ... drawl
E. Blather ... drone

Answers and Explanations

1) A

The main clue in this question is “never tried to hide her prejudices.” This means that my grandmother held prejudices (preconceived, often negative judgments about certain people) and openly expressed them. If her prejudices were racial in nature, then she was a **(A) blatant** racist. “Blatant” is another way to say “obvious,” but it has a negative connotation. Since most people believe that racism is bad, and since the question says “unfortunately,” we can assign a negative connotation to my grandmother’s racism.

(B) is incorrect because *bitter* means full of intense animosity or hate. My grandmother may have been a bitter racist, but this does not relate back to the fact that she never hid her beliefs, so this is not the best answer.

(C) is incorrect because *tolerant* means accepting. Racists by definition are intolerant of others, so there is no such thing as a tolerant racist.

(D) is incorrect because *covert* means hidden or secretive. This is the opposite of obvious or blatant. If my grandmother were a covert racist, then she would not openly express her prejudices.

(E) is incorrect because *subtle* is another opposite for obvious. If my grandmother were a subtle racist, then she would not openly express her prejudices.

2) B

The main clues in this question are “off topic” and “unrelated.” Whenever a speaker begins talking about an off-topic or unrelated subject from the main thread of conversation, that new topic of conversation is a **(B) tangent**. A tangent is an abrupt change of subject that does not pertain to the original topic of discussion. If a physics teacher spends a class period talking about television, the TV-related discussion is a tangent.

(A) is incorrect because a *monologue* is a lengthy speech given by only one person. It is possible that my professor was the only one who talked about her favorite show during class, but we cannot exactly tell from the question. Furthermore, a monologue is not off-topic by definition, so this is not the best answer.

(C) is incorrect because a *diatribe* is a speech of condemnation or criticism. It is unlikely that my professor would deliver a diatribe about her *favorite* show, so this is not the best answer, either.

(D) is incorrect because *discussion* with students is a common instruction technique for professors, there is nothing in the definitions of these words that implies that they are off-topic or unrelated to another topic of conversation.

(E) is incorrect because a *lecture* is a presentation before a class. This is another instruction technique for professors, but it does not imply being off-topic.

3) **A**

The phrase “as a result” sets up a logical, cause and effect relationship. This means that falling on “sharp broken glass” had some effect on me. Most likely, I would have **(A)** *lacerations* (cuts) on my skin as a result of falling on the broken glass. Broken glass is almost always sharp enough to cut through human skin, so it should always be handled with care or avoided entirely.

(B) is incorrect because an *analgesic* is another word for a pain killer. I might use an analgesic to dull my pain, but I would not have a pain killer as a direct result of falling on the glass.

(C) is incorrect because *surgery* is a type of medical procedure or operation carried out by a surgeon. I might need surgery if my lacerations are very serious, but we cannot tell from the question if I need any surgery at all.

(D) is incorrect because a *contusion* is another word for a bruise. I may have a bruise from falling off my bike, but not specifically from landing on the sharp glass. The sharp glass would almost certainly cut me, resulting in lacerations

(E) is incorrect because an *ache* is a long-lasting pain that often has no visible characteristics. My body might ache after falling off my bike, but this is not the best answer for the same reasons as **(D)**. Falling onto sharp glass would almost certainly leave me with lacerations, not just aches.

4) **D**

The semicolon (;) is a punctuation mark that combines two independent clauses that are close in meaning and progress logically from one another. This means that there will be a logical or equal relationship between the governor’s refusal to do something and the fact that a prisoner faces execution. In many countries, government leaders have the power to delay or cancel executions by granting prisoners **(D)** a *reprieve* or a pardon. A pardon excuses a prisoner from all guilt and sets him or her free; a reprieve postpones a prisoner’s sentence. If the governor refused to grant the prisoner a reprieve, then he or she will face death shortly.

(A) is incorrect because a *trial* is required to convict anyone suspected of a crime and send them to prison. This means that the prisoner in the question must have already had a trial.

(B) is incorrect because an *appeal* is an attempt to overturn a sentence through the court system, not through the governor. Governors are not in charge of the appeals process.

(C) is incorrect because the prisoner already has a *sentence*-- the “death sentence,” or execution. A sentence is the penalty that a criminal must pay for his or her wrongdoings.

(E) is incorrect because a *hearing* is another part of the judicial process that governors do not necessarily oversee. A hearing involves going before a judge to state one’s case. This would not necessarily result in overturning the prisoner’s sentence.

5) **E**

The key words in this question are “the hurricane’s destruction.” This means that the city in the question was severely damaged by a hurricane. If the city remained **(E)** *desolate*, then the destruction was still evident and the city was still in a state of disrepair long after the hurricane had passed. Any efforts to rebuild or repair the city must have been *abortive* (unsuccessful or fruitless). If the rebuilding effort were successful, then the city would have returned to its pre-hurricane state, free from destruction or damage.

(A) is incorrect because *blighted* means deteriorated. If the city remained blighted, then the hurricane’s effects would still be clear. Therefore, the recovery efforts must not have been *successful*.

(B) is incorrect because if the city remained *underwater* due to flooding, then the recovery efforts could not have been *effective*. Flood waters must recede before recovery and rebuilding efforts can generally take place.

(C) is incorrect because *barren* means empty or lifeless. This would not be a result of *isolated* rebuilding efforts. Certainly, cooperative rebuilding efforts that united many people and groups may be more effective, but specific people and groups could also rebuild successfully on their own.

(D) is incorrect because a *robust* means strong or vigorous. This would lead to the hurricane’s destruction being repaired. Recovery efforts that successfully restored the city would not have been *wasteful*. They would have been effective and necessary.

6) **A**

We know the original security camera footage was “blurry and inconclusive.” However, the police were able to use the footage in the end. This means that the police must have been able to **(A)** *enhance* the footage, making it sharper and clearer. They could then use these new, clearer images to *identify* the criminal they were trying to catch.

(B) is incorrect because simply *reviewing* blurry footage is not enough to lead the police to an *arrest*. They must make the blurry footage clearer in order to know whom they should arrest.

(C) is incorrect because the footage would not cause the police to *release* a criminal unless the footage somehow proved the person's innocence—and then, by definition, that person could no longer be called a criminal.

(D) is incorrect because simply *watching* blurry footage is not enough to lead the police to *capture* a criminal. They must make the blurry footage clearer in order to know whom they should capture.

(E) is incorrect because the footage would not cause the police to *exonerate* a criminal unless the footage somehow proved the person's innocence—and then, by definition, that person could no longer be called a criminal.

7) **E**

The main clue in this sentence is “harsh critic of religion.” The atheist (someone who does not believe in God) criticizes or says bad things about religion. Sometimes, criticizing someone else's religion can sound like **(E)** *blasphemy*. Blasphemy is any type of anti-religious speech that seriously offends a religious believer by challenging his or her ideas. If someone is criticizing religion, their comments could seem like blasphemy from point of view of religious believers.

(A) is incorrect because the *Beatitudes* refer to a specific set of teachings in the Christian Bible. Outside of the Bible, the word “beatitude” means “a state of utmost bliss.” Neither of these definitions relate to any type of religious criticism, so this answer choice can be ignored.

(B) is incorrect because *worship* is any act of praising God. If someone is criticizing religion, chances are, that person is not praising the god that I believe in.

(C) is incorrect because *liturgy* is a specific, traditional form of worship used in some church services. Criticism of faith has no place in most religions' liturgy.

(D) is incorrect because *dogma* is a firm, immutable tenet of a religion. When someone is a member of a religious denomination, he or she must accept and believe in that religion's dogmas. Anyone who criticizes someone else's faith must not believe in the same dogmas as that person, so this answer choice is also incorrect.

8) **B**

The main clues in this question are “clearly” and “slur your speech.” The structure of this question strongly implies an opposite relationship. The question calls for a type of speech that will make your audience understand you and one type of

speech that will *not* make your audience understand you. If you **(B)** *enunciate* clearly when giving a speech, then you pay particular attention to your pronunciation, making sure that your audience can understand you. On the other hand, if you slur your speech or *mumble*, then your audience will not be able to understand you.

(A) is incorrect because *pontificating* involves making dogmatic statements of belief without considering other opinions. This does not necessarily ensure that your pronunciation will be understood.

(C) is incorrect because if you *speak* clearly, you will be understood, but if you will *not* be “*misunderstood*” if you *articulate* (pronounce things carefully). This answer choice does not fit the pattern of negative meaning triggered by the word “*misunderstood*” in the question.

(D) is incorrect because you will not be understood if you *murmur*. This word refers to quiet or unclear pronunciation.

(E) is incorrect because *blather* means to talk foolishly for a long time. This word does not refer to clear pronunciation that is easy to understand.