



● Sentence Completion 26 *(low-advanced SAT level)*

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

1. Even in the extreme circumstances in which the Donner Party survivors found themselves, the fact that they turned to cannibalism still strikes one as _____; few can imagine resorting to such detestable and repugnant measures to survive.
A. intrepid
B. scrumptious
C. ineffable
D. odious
E. malignant
2. Not wanting others to see how his portrait had been modified, Dorian Grey _____ it with a tarp and kept it locked in his attic.
A. promulgated
B. substantiated
C. shrouded
D. touted
E. gasconaded
3. Many conspiracy theories seem plausible only if one ignores certain facts; conspiracy theorists would rather selectively _____ the facts than reject the ideas in which they believe.
A. disperse
B. accede
C. disburse
D. disseminate
E. preclude
4. The witness's testimony only seemed to _____ the jury, because it contributed nothing but extraneous and confusing information to the defense's case.
A. illuminate
B. obfuscate
C. exculpate
D. clarify
E. vex
5. In Dante's vision of Hell, there are gradated levels of punishment with the lowest chamber reserved for the true _____, those who are thoroughly depraved and whose sins are so great that they are beyond any chance of salvation.
A. altruists
B. vagabonds
C. waifs
D. reprobates
E. martyrs
6. Howard Carter made perhaps the greatest discovery in the history of Egyptology when he became the first archaeologist to enter Tutankhamen's _____, though he quickly noticed that robbers had previously entered the tomb and plundered several valuable pieces.
A. sepulcher
B. apse
C. keep
D. mortuary
E. necropolis

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. Here, the key words are “detestable” and “repugnant,” two adjectives that, like the missing word, describe the “measures” the Donner Party turned to in order to survive, namely cannibalism. Thus, the missing word must be one that likewise means detestable or repugnant. Choice **(D)** is correct, as *odious* means highly offensive or detestable.

(A) is incorrect because *intrepid* means brave. While the members of the Donner Party could be called brave for surviving the conditions they faced, the prompt implies the opposite, calling the survivors’ actions “detestable and repugnant.”

(B) is incorrect because *scrumptious* means very pleasing, the exact opposite of the way the prompt describes the survivors’ deeds.

(C) is incorrect because *ineffable* means inexpressible in words. While it was probably hard for the survivors of the Donner Party to discuss how they would survive, the prompt does not explicitly refer to this. Instead, it suggests only that these measures were “detestable and repugnant.”

(E) is incorrect because *malignant* means harmful, though the prompt makes a value judgment of the cannibalism, not whether or not it caused harm.

2) C

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. Here, the entire first clause gives the key words for the missing word, as the sentence hinges on a cause-and-effect relationship. The missing word describes the effect of the fact that Dorian did not want “others to see...his portrait.” Thus, he must have done something to hide it or conceal it, meaning the missing word is one that means hid. Choice **(C)** provides the best answer choice, as *shrouded* means concealed or covered.

(A) is incorrect because *promulgated* means proclaimed, the very opposite of what one would do if he did not want others to see a certain thing.

(B) is incorrect because *substantiated* means proved, though the prompt implies that Dorian did not wish for others to know of the portrait.

(D) is incorrect because *touted* means advertised, the very opposite of what one would do if he did not want others to see a certain thing.

(E) is incorrect because *gasconaded* means bragged, the very opposite of what one would do if he did not want others to see a certain thing.

3) **E**

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 “plausible only if one ignores certain facts.” This phrase, like the missing word, describes how conspiracy theorists treat facts and why. The prompt hinges on a cause-and-effect relationship, with the key phrase serving as the cause for the missing word. Because some facts do not benefit the conspiracy theorists, they are likely to selectively ignore or reject them. Thus, the missing word means not accept as true. Choice **(E)** provides such a word: *preclude* means rule out in advance.

(A) is incorrect because *disperse* means spread widely. The prompt implies that conspiracy theorists tend to ignore facts as the facts call their theories into question. Thus, they would be unlikely to spread contradictory facts around.

(B) is incorrect because *accede* means to give approval. The prompt implies that conspiracy theorists do not approve of the facts. Instead, they selectively ignore them.

(C) is incorrect because *disburse* means scatter. This would imply that the conspiracy theorists wished to spread the facts around, though the prompt states that conspiracy theorists discount the facts.

(D) is incorrect because *disseminate* means spread widely. The prompt implies that conspiracy theorists tend to ignore facts as the facts call their theories into question. Thus, they would be unlikely to spread the facts around.

4) **B**

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 “extraneous” and “confusing,” two words that describe the type of information the witness’s testimony added. The missing word describes the effects of the testimony on the jury, and because it was “confusing,” it must have confused the jury. Therefore, the missing word means confuse, and choice **(B)** is correct: *obfuscate* means confuse.

(A) is incorrect because *illuminate* means enlighten or make clear. This word does not describe the effect of “confusing information” on a jury.

(C) is incorrect because *exculpate* means clear of blame. While some testimony might exculpate a defendant, a jury would be unlikely to be cleared of blame, as juries are usually not accused of crimes. Moreover, “extraneous and confusing information” would be unlikely to exculpate a defendant anyway.

(D) is incorrect because *clarify* means make clear. This word does not describe the effect of “confusing information” on a jury.

(E) is incorrect because *vex* means irritate. Though “confusing information” might irritate a jury, there is not enough evidence to support this conclusion. The prompt only makes it clear that the evidence was “extraneous and confusing,” not irksome or irritating.

5) **D**

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 “depraved,” a word that describes those who are in the lowest chamber of Hell. The missing word is a noun that identifies these same individuals, so the missing word must mean depraved individuals. Choice (D) provides such a word, as *reprobates* are wicked, heinous, and depraved individuals.

(A) is incorrect because *altruists* are those who do good works but seek no reward or benefit for themselves. Thus, an altruist would not be described as one is “truly depraved,” as an altruist is the opposite of such a person.

(B) is incorrect because *vagabonds* are nomads. While they might not be morally good people, they are not necessarily “depraved.” Additionally, the prompt does not imply that the people described by the missing word are wanderers or nomads.

(C) is incorrect because *waifs* are orphans or abandoned goods, not necessarily people who would be described as “truly depraved.”

(E) is incorrect because *martyrs* are people who suffer for their faith or beliefs. They would likely not be in Dante’s Hell, then, as they would be moral believers of Dante’s faith. Moreover, martyrs are not typically “depraved.”

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 word is “tomb,” since the missing word refers to what Carter entered, a space that is later identified as the same tomb the robbers entered. Thus, the missing word must mean “tomb,” so choice (A) is correct, as a *sepulcher* is a burial chamber or tomb.

(B) is incorrect because an *apse* is a semicircular recess in a building, not necessarily a tomb.

(C) is incorrect because a *keep* is the innermost tower of a castle, not a tomb.

(D) is incorrect because a *mortuary* is a funeral home or a place that holds the dead before burial, though the thing Carter entered is described as a “tomb,” a word that implies that Tutankhamen was already buried.

(E) is incorrect because a *necropolis* is a large burial ground such as a cemetery, though the prompt only implies that one person was buried in the “tomb” Carter discovered.