



● Sentence Completion 4 (low-advanced SAT level)

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

1. Because of the professor's reputation for being _____, the students in her class were surprised by her _____ in the first lecture of the semester.
A. garrulous ... bombast
B. pithy ... terseness
C. succinct ... congeniality
D. loquacious ... brevity
E. erudite ... intellect
2. Nearly every ancient culture had a myth involving a trickster character, a _____ individual who creates mischief either through cunningness or foolishness.
A. waggish
B. venerable
C. stoic
D. portly
E. stern
3. The hall of fame committee was nearly unanimous in _____ the star athlete; only one voter _____ and did not support the athlete's induction.
A. dismissing ... saluted
B. praising ... duped
C. lauding ... dissented
D. reprimanding ... abstained
E. ruing ... refrained
4. The repair shop attempted to _____ the damaged automobile but ultimately decided it was irreparable.
A. sabotage
B. sap
C. salvage
D. retain
E. retrench
5. Far more than being merely _____, the titular character in Herman Melville's *The Confidence-Man* appears to be downright _____; most contemporary scholars assume he is a fill-in for the devil.
A. villainous ... evil
B. restive ... furtive
C. decorous ... misanthropic
D. nefarious ... indecent
E. moral ... virtuous
6. The author's first novel had such a _____ story that critics quickly dismissed the author as a _____.
A. hackneyed ... professional
B. suspenseful ... poseur
C. transparent ... scamp
D. trite ... hack
E. convoluted ... realist
7. The governor and his entourage traveled to the best restaurant in Seattle because they wanted to eat food prepared by the state's _____ chef.
A. abominable
B. preeminent
C. potable
D. monastic
E. haggard
8. Upon being cited for speeding, the driver became _____ and took out his anger by smashing a CD case on his dashboard.
A. allayed
B. depraved
C. hypercritical
D. guileless
E. irate

Answers and Explanations

1) D

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. Here, it is impossible to predict the words themselves, though it is possible to figure out the relationship between them. In this prompt, the key word is “surprised,” so whatever the first word is, it must be the opposite meaning of the second word. After all, if the words had the same meaning, then the students would not be “surprised.” Of the answer choices, only **(D)** offers a pair of opposites; *loquacious* means talkative, while *brevity* means conciseness.

(A) is incorrect because *garrulous* means talkative and *bombast* means pompous speech. Thus, there is no relationship between the words.

(B) is incorrect because *pithy* means concise and *terseness* means conciseness. Thus, the words have similar, not opposite, meanings.

(C) is incorrect because *succinct* means concise and *congeniality* means pleasantness. Thus, there is no relationship between the words.

(E) is incorrect because *erudite* means learned or scholarly and *intellect* means higher mental powers. Thus, the words have similar, not opposite, meanings.

2) A

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words in the prompt. Here, the key words are “trickster” and the phrase “creates mischief.” Thus, the missing word must be an adjective that would describe a trickster who creates mischief. **(A)** is correct as it offers such a word: *waggish* means mischievous or tricky.

(B) is incorrect because *venerable* means deserving high respect, which is not something that would be said of a trickster.

(C) is incorrect because *stoic* means impassive, a word that has nothing to do with a trickster or mischief.

(D) is incorrect because *portly* means stout, a word that has nothing to do with a trickster or mischief.

(E) is incorrect because *stern* means strict, a word that has nothing to do with a trickster or mischief.

3) C

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words in the prompt. The key word for the first blank comes in the sentence’s

second clause, when it is revealed that the athlete was inducted into the hall of fame. Thus, the committee must have praised the athlete, as it would not have been likely to vote for an athlete whom it did not praise.

The second missing word's key phrase is in the first clause: "nearly unanimous." "Nearly unanimous" implies that a vast majority, but not all, of the members voted for the athlete's induction. Thus, one voter must have not supported the induction, or else it would have been a unanimous decision. The two words are, thus, opposites, as the first refers to supporting and the second to rejecting the athlete.

Of the answer choices, only choice **(C)** provides a word that implies "praising" for the first missing word and that one voter did not support the induction for the second missing word. *Lauding* means praising, while *dissented* means differed in opinion.

(A) is incorrect because *dismissing* means rejecting and *saluted* means honored. As the athlete was inducted into the hall of fame, the committee probably did not reject him. These words have the proper opposite meaning but would have to be in reverse order to work as an answer choice.

(B) is incorrect because only one of the words fits for a missing word. While *praising* works in context for the first missing word, as praising means honoring, *duped* means fooled or tricked and, thus, has no connection to anything in the prompt.

(D) is incorrect because only one of the words fits for a missing word. While *abstained* works in the second blank, as abstained means did not participate, *reprimanding* means punishing and, as such, means the opposite of the word that would have to go in the first blank.

(E) is incorrect because only one of the words fits for a missing word. While *refrained* works in the second blank, as refrained means did not participate, *ruining* means regretting and, as such, means the opposite of the word that would have to go in the first blank.

4) **C**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words in the prompt. Here, the key word is "irreparable," a word that means the automobile could not be fixed. However, the prompt implies that the repair shop attempted to fix the automobile before deciding it could not be fixed. Thus, the missing word must mean something akin to fix. Of the answer choices, only **(C)** provides a word that means fix, as *salvage* means rescue from loss.

(A) is incorrect because *sabotage* means deliberately destroy and is, thus, the opposite of what a repair shop would attempt to do to a damaged automobile.

(B) is incorrect because *sap* means undermine and is, thus, the opposite of what a repair shop would attempt to do to a damaged automobile.

(D) is incorrect because *retain* means keep or employ. A repair shop would not be likely to keep an irreparable automobile, so it does not work in context.

(E) is incorrect because *retrench* means economize, a word that in no way describes what a repair shop would do to a damaged automobile.

5) **A**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words in the prompt. Here, the key word for both words is the “devil” in the last clause. The devil is descriptive of something negative. The construction of the prompt is such that the two words both mean bad things, but the first one is less bad than the second one, as the second missing word is “more than” the first one. (A) is the best choice as it provides two words that would describe the devil, though the second one is worse in degree than is the first. *Villainous* means wicked, while *evil* means profoundly wicked.

(B) is incorrect because *restive* and *furtive* do not have a relationship of degree. Restive means impatient, while furtive means sneaky. Neither necessarily would be descriptive of the devil, either.

(C) is incorrect because *decorous* and *misanthropic* do not have a relationship of degree. Decorous means proper, while misanthropic means people hating. Of these, only the latter would describe the devil.

(D) is incorrect because *nefarious* and *indecent* are the right words in the wrong order. The prompt requires the more severe word to go in place of the second missing word, but nefarious is the more extreme, as it means very wicked, while indecent means merely improper.

(E) is incorrect because *moral* and *virtuous* are not words that would describe the devil, as moral means proper and virtuous means extremely moral.

6) **D**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words in the prompt. Here, it is impossible to predict the meanings of the words, though one can predict their relationship. The construction of the sentence suggests that the first missing word caused critics to “dismiss the author” as whatever the second missing word is. Thus, the first missing word must be an adjective that could be used to describe the noun of the second missing word. Of the answer choices, only (D) provides such a relationship: *trite* means hackneyed, and *hack* can refer to a mediocre writer.

(A) is incorrect, because *hackneyed* means commonplace and *professional* means an expert. Thus, there is no relationship between these two words.

(B) is incorrect because *suspenseful* means exciting and *poseur* means someone who pretends to be sophisticated but is not. There is no relationship between these words.

(C) is incorrect because *transparent* means clear and *scamp* means a rascal. These words have no relationship.

(E) is incorrect because *convoluted* means intricate and *realist* means a person who represents things as they really are. If anything, these words have opposite meanings, not similar meanings.

7) **B**

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 “best.” The governor wanted to eat at the best restaurant so he/she could eat food prepared by the “best” chef. (B) is the best choice, then, as *preeminent* means outstanding.

(A) is incorrect because *abominable* means extremely unpleasant, the opposite of the word the prompt is looking for.

(C) is incorrect because *potable* means suitable for drinking. Thus, this word has no relationship to the rest of the prompt.

(D) is incorrect because *monastic* means related to monks. Thus, this word has no relationship to the rest of the prompt.

(E) is incorrect because *haggard* means gaunt or wasted away. It has nothing to do with the “best restaurant in Seattle,” then.

8) **E**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words in the prompt. Here, the key word is “anger,” as the driver took out his anger after becoming the missing word. Thus, the missing word must mean something akin to “angry.” Of the answer choices, (E) is the best, as *irate* means angry.

(A) is incorrect because *allayed* means soothed, a word that is the opposite of anger. If the driver were allayed, he would not need to take out his anger.

(B) is incorrect because *depraved* means wicked, and the prompt only suggests that the driver became angry, not that he became evil or wicked.

(C) is incorrect because *hypercritical* means exacting, a word that does not relate to the fact that the driver took out his anger.

(D) is incorrect because *guileless* means honest. Nothing in the prompt suggests that the driver was honest, only that he took out his anger.