



● **Sentence Completion 9** (*high-intermediate level*)

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

1. The lost earrings are valuable, and a handsome _____ was given to the woman who returned them.
A. congratulations
B. settlement
C. reward
D. duty
E. investment
2. The room fell silent as the ambassador entered; she had everyone's attention as well as their _____.
A. levity
B. resentment
C. fear
D. respect
E. concern
3. Attendance is not _____; employees are _____ to arrive at the meeting at 8:00 sharp.
A. expected ... demanded
B. practical ... needed
C. questionable ... instructed
D. optional ... required
E. necessary ... challenged
4. Stanley ate well, exercised, and had very few bad habits. Chewing his fingernails was his only _____.
A. reward
B. vice
C. pastime
D. occupation
E. business
5. The _____ stood at the podium and spoke about distant galaxies, planets, and stars.
A. investigator
B. astronomer
C. attorney
D. surveyor
E. economist
6. Mary is an independent and innovative thinker, therefore it is best to grant her a good deal of _____ with regard to the direction of her research.
A. preoccupation
B. teamwork
C. interest
D. autonomy
E. assistance
7. It is clear that there is a _____ in their midst. Still, the _____ soldiers hesitate to accuse one of their own.
A. buffoon ... comedic
B. traitor ... loyal
C. weapon ... dangerous
D. general ... disrespectful
E. enemy ... cunning
8. The _____ mountain peaks soared up into the clouds, while the cool riverbed lay low in the _____.
A. diminutive ... basement
B. compact ... apex
C. bottomless ... pinnacle
D. distant ... point
E. towering ... valley

Answers and Explanations

1) **C**

The main clue in this question is “the lost earrings are valuable.” This means that a pair of expensive earrings was misplaced. Sometimes when things go missing, the owners offer a (C) reward to anyone who can find and return what has been lost. The reward is a special prize or gift given in exchange for finding and returning the lost item. If a woman found the valuable earrings, she might have returned them and gotten a reward. The correct answer is (C).

You do not usually give (A) congratulations to people who return lost things. You congratulate people who have achieved something important, but this is not necessarily one of those achievements. Similarly, it is not appropriate to give a (B) settlement, (D) duty, or (E) investment to someone who returns a pair of earrings. None of these mean the exact same thing as “reward,” so they are not the best answer choices.

2) **D**

An ambassador is an important government official who represents a country to other, foreign lands. If you meet with an ambassador, you are meeting with an important, powerful figure. You should give her your full attention and (D) respect. This might include falling silent when she enters the room, because you will want to end your other, less important conversations with others as a sign of respect. The correct answer is (D).

The other answer choices involve feelings and ideas that do not directly relate to how one should interact with an ambassador. Showing (A) levity means laughing and being happy, not falling silent and providing undivided attention. Showing (B) resentment would mean that you act rudely or bitterly toward the ambassador, and that is not appropriate. There is no need to show (C) fear to the ambassador, because there is no reason to be afraid of her. Finally, there is no reason to be (E) concerned about the ambassador unless she is in some kind of trouble or danger. These answer choices are incorrect.

3) **D**

The correct answer choice will set up an opposite relationship. If something is not (D) optional, then it is mandatory. You cannot choose whether or not you will attend; you *must* attend. Therefore, you will be (D) required to show up to the meeting at the appointed time. The correct answer is (D).

The other answer choices do not set up logical, opposite relationships. If attendance is not (A) expected, then no one is (A) demanding that employees attend. In fact, it is assumed that the employees will not attend at all. If attendance is not (B) practical, there is no effect on whether or not employees will be (B) needed. These are two unrelated ideas. Similarly, there is no

relationship between attendance being (C) questionable and employees being (C) instructed to attend, or between (E) necessary attendance and employees being (E) challenged to attend. These answer choices are incorrect.

4) **B**

The main clue in this question is “bad habits.” A “bad habit” is something that you repeatedly do, even though you know you should not do it. Chewing your fingernails is often considered to be a bad habit. Another word for bad habit is (B) vice. “Vice” has a stronger connotation and is often connected to crime. However, when used in this context, the reader understands that chewing your nails is not a criminal offense. The correct answer is (B).

The other answer choices do not mean the same thing as “bad habit.” A (A) reward is a prize given in exchange for a good deed, but this does not describe chewing one’s fingernails. A (C) pastime is a hobby. While it is true that Stanley does not chew his fingers as a hobby; he probably chews them as a nervous or unconscious habit. Chewing your nails is not an (D) occupation, which is a job or the way you spend your time. It is not a (E) business, because it doesn’t employ Stanley and he doesn’t make money from it. These answer choices are incorrect.

5) **B**

The main clue in this question is “distant galaxies, planets, and stars.” This means that the person at the podium is an expert in topics related to outer space. A scientist who studies outer space is known as an (B) astronomer. The correct answer is (B).

An (A) investigator is someone who investigates crimes, like a detective. Investigators do not usually specialize in galaxies, planets, and stars. (C) Attorneys are professionals who study the law and represent people in trials. (D) Surveyors study the layout of tracts of land so that maps can be drawn accurately and buildings can be built safely. (E) Economists study markets and businesses. None of these professionals study outer space.

6) **D**

The main clue in this question is the word “independent.” This means that Mary does her best work when she is by herself. She does not necessarily need others to help her. Another word for “independent” is “autonomous.” If Mary is granted (D) autonomy in her research, she will probably do very good work. The correct answer is (D).

The other answer choices do not relate to Mary’s independent nature. (A) Preoccupation and (C) interest are totally unrelated to Mary’s independent thinking, so we can ignore these answer choices right away. Giving Mary extra (B) teamwork or (E) assistance runs contrary to how she works best. She works independently, by herself.

7) **B**

A (B) traitor is someone who acts contrary to the best interest of a group to which he or she belongs. If there is a traitor in a group of soldiers, then one soldier is secretly helping the enemy. This is not in the best interest of the other soldiers, who want to defeat the enemy. However, (B) loyal soldiers trust one another and will be hesitant to accuse another soldier in their squad or battalion. Being loyal to one another means they do not wish to accuse one another of wrongdoing. The correct answer is (B).

The other answer choices do not set up logical relationships. (A) Comedic soldiers are fairly uncommon, because most soldiers are very serious. Furthermore, they would not hesitate to accuse another soldier of being a (A) buffoon. (C) Dangerous soldiers would not hesitate to accuse one another of having (C) weapons. All soldiers carry weapons; this is not a shocking or negative accusation. (D) Disrespectful soldiers would not accuse one another of being a (D) general. A general is a high-ranking military leader, so accusing someone of being a general is not shocking or negative, either. (E) Cunning soldiers would not hesitate to accuse an (E) enemy among them. "Cunning" means "sneaky" or "tricky," but these characteristics are unrelated to the idea of fighting an enemy army.

8) **E**

The word "while" can mean that two things are related in a negative or opposite way. The correct answer choice will set up an opposite relationship between the mountains and the river. If the mountains reach into the clouds, they are very tall. Another word for "very tall" is (E) towering. In contrast, the river is lower down in the (E) valley. A valley is a low stretch of flat land below a mountain. The correct answer is (E).

The other answer choices do not match set up opposite relationships related to the elevation of the mountains and the river. (A) Diminutive means "small," so mountains that reach into the clouds are not diminutive. Furthermore, a (A) basement is part of a building, so it is unlikely that a river would run through a building's basement. (B) Compact is another way of saying "small," so these mountains are not compact, either. The (B) apex is the highest or tallest point on an object, so a low-lying river is not at the apex of the land. (C) Pinnacle is similar in meaning to "apex," so we can ignore that answer choice too. A low-lying river will not be at the pinnacle of the land. We don't know if the mountain peaks are (D) distant or near, but we do know that the river does not lie at one single (D) point. Rivers are long paths of running water, not single points, so this answer choice is also incorrect.