



● Sentence Completion 15 (low-advanced SAT level)

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

1. Hoping to stall a vote on the bill, the senator continued to _____ on at great lengths as part of her filibuster, a _____ measure used to keep debating an issue long enough to win new supporters or prevent a vote altogether.
 - A. babble ... lackadaisical
 - B. eulogize ... ponderous
 - C. maunder ... zealous
 - D. ramble ... dilatory
 - E. ratify ... procrastinating
2. To many in the late nineteenth century, Theodore Roosevelt was the _____ of masculinity; despite his aristocratic East Coast background, he seemed to embody all the characteristics that defined the ideal male: a rugged outdoorsman of the West.
 - A. apostate
 - B. apotheosis
 - C. aphorism
 - D. appellation
 - E. apparition
3. The novelist refused to give in to those protesters who said the book was offensive and needed to be _____ before schoolchildren could be allowed to read it.
 - A. sanctioned
 - B. expurgated
 - C. perused
 - D. excerpted
 - E. prevailed
4. To garner a wider audience, Dante wrote *Inferno* in the _____ Italian language rather than the high Latin most poets still used in the Middle Ages, since most Italians could not read Latin.
 - A. stilted
 - B. vernacular
 - C. mellifluous
 - D. expository
 - E. grandiloquent
5. Many of the revisionist Western films of the 1960s and 1970s focus on _____ loners and drifters obsessed with revenge.
 - A. mendicant
 - B. sympathetic
 - C. reverent
 - D. saturnine
 - E. vindictive
6. One of the skills a good interviewer must quickly acquire is the ability to sort an interviewee's answers into separate antithetical categories of _____ and _____ so as to write out a truthful account.
 - A. fabrication ... falsehood
 - B. verity ... mendacity
 - C. fact ... palpability
 - D. subtlety ... stupor
 - E. mimicry ... restitution

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, each missing word has its own set of key words, though both key words are similar in meaning. The first word is part of a cause-and-effect relationship with its key words, the introductory modifying clause “hoping to stall a vote on the bill.” As the missing word is the effect of that goal, it must mean something that implies the senator did something to delay the vote. The second missing word’s key word is “filibuster,” which is followed by a comma and an explanation of the word. Thus, the missing word is part of the definition of filibuster. If one did not know what a filibuster is, one could actually use the same key words as the first missing word, the aforementioned “hoping to stall a vote on the bill,” since the second missing word is an adjective describing a measure that would be taken to do that. The second missing word must be related to delaying or stalling an action. Choice **(D)** is the best answer, as *ramble* means talk in a discursive, aimless way, a way that would delay the vote, and *dilatory* means intended to delay.

(A) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Babble* means to talk aimlessly and so would work for a word that implies what the senator did to delay the vote, but *lackadaisical* means lacking purpose, though the filibuster has a clear purpose.

(B) is incorrect because neither word works in context. *Eulogize* means to praise someone (usually someone who has died), while *ponderous* means heavy or dull. Both words are unrelated to this prompt.

(C) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Maunder* means to talk foolishly and aimlessly and so would work for a word that implies what the senator did to delay the vote, but *zealous* means excited, and nothing in the prompt implies that the filibuster is exciting.

(E) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. *Procrastinating* means putting off until the last possible moment, so it could accurately describe the filibuster. However, *ratify* means to approve formally. The senator is actually attempting to prevent the vote on the bill, not approve it.

2) 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 “embody,” which implies that Roosevelt was the embodiment of the ideal male. The missing word must also be a noun that describes Roosevelt’s relationship to masculinity, so the missing word must be one that means embodiment. Choice **(B)** provides such a word: *apotheosis* means the ideal example of something.

(A) is incorrect because an *apostate* is one who abandons his belief system, not someone who embodies a certain trait.

(C) is incorrect because an *aphorism* is a pithy truth or a maxim, not someone who embodies a certain trait.

(D) is incorrect because an *appellation* is simply a name or title, not someone who embodies a certain trait.

(E) is incorrect because an *apparition* is a spirit or ghost, not someone who embodies a certain trait.

3) **B**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. Here, the missing word hinges on something the novelist “refused” to do despite charges that the book was “offensive.” The missing word is what the protesters wanted the novelist to do. Of the answer choices, only choice (B) has anything to do with offensive materials, as *expurgated* means removed offensive parts of a book. The prompt makes it clear that the novelist refused to remove offensive materials from his book.

(A) is incorrect because *sanctioned* means allowed, which is the opposite meaning of the missing word. The prompt implies that the protesters did not allow the book to be given to schoolchildren.

(C) is incorrect because *perused* means read closely. The protesters want to prevent children from reading the book, which is the opposite of wanting the children to peruse the book.

(D) is incorrect because *excerpted* means selected passages of the book. The prompt implies that the protesters wanted to edit or alter the book to remove offensive materials, not merely select passages from it.

(E) is incorrect because *prevailed* means overcame or triumphed over. It is, thus, not a word that in any way relates to a book’s offensive materials.

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 “wider audience,” and “most Italians.” The prompt explains that Dante was hoping to win a wider audience of most Italians by abandoning Latin for Italian. Italian must, thus, be a language most people could read, unlike Latin, and the missing word must be one that describes such a language. Choice (B) provides such a word: *vernacular* means the living language or natural style of the people.

(A) is incorrect because *stilted* means bombastic or arrogant and is, as such, a word that would describe Latin in the prompt, not Italian.

(C) is incorrect because *mellifluous* means sweetly flowing. It has nothing to do with being the language of the common people.

(D) is incorrect because *expository* means explanatory and is, as such, a word that has nothing to do with being the language of the common people.

(E) is incorrect because *grandiloquent* means bombastic or arrogant and is, as such, a word that would describe Latin in the prompt, not Italian.

5) 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 “obsessed with revenge,” a phrase that, like the missing word, describes the “loners and drifters” of the films. Thus, the missing word must be one that means obsessed with revenge. Therefore, choice (E) is correct, as *vindictive* means out for revenge.

(A) is incorrect because *mendicant* is a noun meaning a beggar. Nothing in the prompt implies that the loners of the films are beggars, and also the missing word must be an adjective describing them, not a noun.

(B) is incorrect because *sympathetic* means understanding, and one “obsessed with revenge” would not typically be described as “understanding.”

(C) is incorrect because *reverent* means respectful, and one “obsessed with revenge” would not typically be described as “respectful.”

(D) is incorrect because *saturnine* means gloomy, but the prompt implies only that the “loners and drifters” of the films are “obsessed with revenge,” not that they are deeply saddened.

6) B

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. Here, the only key words are “truthful” and “antithetical.” The former provides the goal of sorting out answers into categories, while the latter implies that the two categories are opposites of each other. Thus, the two missing words must be antonyms about truth. Choice (B) provides a pair of opposites about truth, as *verity* means the quality of being true and *mendacity* means dishonesty.

(A) is incorrect because it provides a pair of synonyms, rather than a pair of antonyms. A *fabrication* is something that is fake, while a *falsehood* is something that is not true.

(C) is incorrect because it provides a pair of synonyms, rather than a pair of antonyms. A *fact* is a verifiable truth, while *palpability* means tangibility or something that can be touched or verified.

(D) is incorrect because it provides two words that are antonyms but that have no relationship to the idea of “a truthful account.” *Subtlety* means perceptiveness, while *stupor* means a lack of awareness.

(E) is incorrect because it provides two words that have no relationship to each other or to the idea of “a truthful account.” *Mimicry* means copying or aping, while *restitution* means reparation.