

Sentence Completion Answers and Explanations

1. Choice (D) is correct: This sentence asks you to look for a word that describes how the ravens behave. The information after the comma restates and defines the meaning of the missing word. You are told that the ravens “actively help one another.” Only one word among the choices accurately describes this behavior: cooperatively.

2. Choice (D) is correct: In this sentence, you are looking for two words that describe Wilson. One of the words has to mean that he “seldom spoke” and the other that he “never spent money.” The correct answer is “taciturn, miserly.” Taciturn means, “shy, unwilling to talk.” Miserly means “like a miser, extremely stingy.”

3. Choice (B) is correct. “Resist” means to withstand the force or effect of. If one were to insert this term into the text, the sentence would read “Architects define a physical structure as a set of materials arranged in such a way that these materials can resist the downward pull of gravity.” The term “resist” logically completes this sentence because a building that cannot withstand gravitational force will collapse.

4. Choice (A) is correct. “Reliable” means dependable. If one were to insert this term into the text, the sentence would read “Conflicting standards for allowable radiation levels in foods made reliable appraisals of the damage to crops following the reactor meltdown extremely difficult.” It makes sense that “conflicting,” or inconsistent, standards would affect the dependability of “appraisals” or estimates.

5. Choice (B) is correct. “Rebelliousness” means defiance, and “suppressed” means put down by authority or force. If one were to insert these terms into the text, the sentence would read, “In a society that abhors rebelliousness, the nonconformist is persistently suppressed.” A “nonconformist” is someone who defies rules, so it makes sense that a society that “abhors,” or hates, defiance would “suppress” such an individual.

6. Choice (E) is correct. “Accurate” means free from error. “Misquotations” refer to mistakes made while attempting to reproduce statements made by others. If one were to insert these terms into the text, the sentence would read, “The editor expected her reporters to be accurate, but the number of misquotations in the articles submitted clearly showed that her expectations were often not met.” The term “but” indicates a contrast between the editor’s expectations of her reporters and their actual performance. It is logical that an editor would expect “accuracy” from her reporters, and “misquotations” are an example of inaccuracy.

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7. Choice (B) is correct. "Illustrate" means to show or prove. If one were to insert this term into the text, the sentence would read "Records documenting the presence of Africans among the crews of explorers like Christopher Columbus illustrate the antiquity of the African presence in the Americas." Records indicating that Africans took part in early explorations of the Americas would indeed "illustrate," or show, the long-standing presence that Africans have had in this part of the world.
8. Choice (A) is correct. "Functional" means useful and practical. If one were to insert this term into the text, the sentence would read "Business letters are largely functional, conveying unadorned information in a clear and concise manner." The comma sets up an explanation of the missing term. "Functional" works in this context because most business letters do serve a purely practical function, with little "adornment," or embellishment.
9. Choice (A) is correct. "Lofty" means overly proud or arrogant. If one were to insert this term into the text, the sentence would read "During her interview with local students, the dignitary exchanged her lofty public manner for a friendlier, less pretentious one." The sentence indicates that the dignitary adjusts her demeanor according to her audience. The fact that she is "friendlier" and "less pretentious" with students implies that she is more pretentious, or "lofty" when addressing the public.
10. Choice (B) is correct. "Bitterness" refers to an extremely resentful and cynical attitude. If one were to insert this term into the text, the sentence would read "Through the years, financial misfortunes and personal tragedies turned his early cynicism into hardened bitterness." The word "hardened" indicates that the missing term must describe an attitude that is similar to "cynicism." "Bitterness" is nearly synonymous with "cynicism."
11. Choice (B) is correct. "Popularity" means having a wide acceptance; "wide" means having a broad extent. If one were to insert these terms into the text, the sentence would read "The popularity of Sandra Cisneros' works, which have sold many thousands of copies, is reflected in her wide readership." The phrase "reflected in" indicates that there will be a similarity between the missing terms. Since the sentence states that the works "have sold many thousands of copies," the missing terms must reflect this broad appeal. Therefore, it makes sense that the "popularity" of Cisneros' works would be reflected in a "wide" readership.
12. Choice (A) is correct. "Structural" means physical. If one were to insert this term into the text, the sentence would read "Much work was needed to determine the distances between the atoms, the angles between the chemical bonds, and other structural features." The missing term must be related to the distances and angles mentioned in the sentence. These features are "structural," or physical, characteristics.

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13. Choice (A) is correct. "Illustrations" are examples that clarify; "hold," as used here, means to possess. If one were to insert these terms into the text, the sentence would read "The establishment of a women's college by the Cherokee nation during the 1850's is one of many illustrations of the considerable status traditionally held by Cherokee women." The early development of a women's college logically implies that Cherokee women were held in high esteem within their culture.

14. Choice (D) is correct. "Changed" means made different; "mercurial" means quickly changeable. If one were to insert these terms into the text, the sentence would read "Because Ruth's parents often changed their plans as soon as they were formed, she assumed all adults were as mercurial as her parents." The sentence structure indicates that the second missing term will reflect a characteristic of someone who engages in the action described by the first missing term. People who often change their minds are indeed "mercurial."

15. Choice (B) is correct. "Dignified" means honored or proper. If one were to insert this term into the text, the sentence would read "In sharp contrast to the previous night's revelry, the wedding was a dignified affair." The phrase "in sharp contrast" indicates that the missing term will be the opposite of "revelry," or noisy partying. A dignified wedding would indeed be a contrast to a night of revelry.

16. Choice (E) is correct: A favorable outcome is most likely to result in the candidates preparing an acceptance speech, in this case the nature of the outcome will determine what kind of speech the candidate will prepare.

17. Choice (D) is correct: The comma following the word breeder is a clue that the words that follow will define or explain what kind of breeder is recommended. Only choice (D) provides two words that can define or explain each other. A reputable breeder is one who is admired and respected.

18. Choice (B) is correct: The comma in this sentence completion question is a clue that the missing word means the same as impeccable manners and excellent taste. Decorum, which means propriety and good taste in behavior, speech, or dress, is the best choice.

19. Choice (C) is correct: The semicolon is a clue that the second part of the sentence describes or explains the first part of the sentence. Evidence that places someone at the scene of a crime is incriminating; it involves the person and makes that person look guilty.

20. Choice (E) is correct: The word because is a clue that the sentence shows a cause and effect relationship. Skiing fearlessly down the steepest trails is likely to earn someone the reputation of being a daredevil.

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21. Choice (A) is correct: this question requires you to find an answer choice that complements the other parts of the sentence. Complementary ideas provide additional support for the meaning of the sentence. The correct choice often has a similar meaning to another key word in the sentence. The panel was erudite, or learned. As a result, each of them had ample knowledge of the Renaissance.

22. Choice (A) is correct: Paradoxically in the first clause and but in the second clause are clues that ideas in this sentence are in contrast to each other. Following the logic of the sentence the first effect was bad and the second effect was good.

23. Choice (C) is correct: Despite is a clue that the sentence sets up a contrast. We want to keep the environment safe, but there are problems with pollution. The first blank requires a word that tells what we want to do about problems of pollution.

24. Choice (A) is correct: This sentence sets up a contrast in ideas by use of the word despite. The despite construction provides you with a clue that the answer you are looking for will contrast with another word in the sentence.

25. Choice (D) is correct: Although not providing an exact restatement of the definition as many vocabulary in context questions do this question does offer you a clue to getting the right answer. The phrase overcoming adversity as it relates to having suffered numerous injuries is the key to this question. Ask yourself which answer choice most closely denotes “overcoming adversity”? Resilience (D), meaning the ability to recover quickly from illness, change, or misfortune, is the correct answer.