



● Sentence Completion 13 *(high-advanced GRE level)*

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

1. The real estate developer's plans caused public outrage from local citizens; nevertheless, in spite of the _____ he received, he decided to go ahead with construction of a new shopping center.
A. aspersion
B. cavil
C. stigma
D. laudation
E. obloquy
2. Because Peter had always loyally supported his brother, he expected his brother to reciprocate such _____; as a result, he was extremely dismayed when his brother proved _____ and openly criticized his business plan.
A. treachery ... apostate
B. fealty ... recreant
C. sedition ... duplicitous
D. perfidy ... allegiant
E. fidelity ... steadfast
3. Chicago Mayor Richard Daley made an oft-quoted _____ when he famously mixed up the words "preserve" and "prevent" in stating that the "police don't cause disorder, the police are here to preserve disorder."
A. malapropism
B. solecism
C. vernacularism
D. solipsism
E. catachresis
4. Ada felt she had to fulfill her _____ duties to her mother, though she did not understand why her brother did not feel any similar responsibility as his mother's son.
A. puerile
B. callow
C. fiduciary
D. culpable
E. filial
5. Watching a cooking show can often arouse one's appetite; likewise, watching a travel show can _____ one's desire to go on vacation.
A. instigate
B. foment
C. strop
D. whet
E. goad
6. The writing teacher offered up Dashiell Hammet and Ernest Hemingway as authors who were notoriously _____; conversely, she pointed to Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner when pressed for an example of writers who tended to be more _____.
A. compendious ... curt
B. altruistic ... turgid
C. pithy ... periphrastic
D. succinct ... laconic
E. garrulous ... verbose

Answers and Explanations

1) **E**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. In this prompt, the key words are “public outrage,” which the prompt says was “caused” by “the real estate developer’s plans.” The missing word describes something “he received,” so it too must refer to the outrage he attracted “from local citizens.” The missing word must mean outrage and opprobrium, which means choice **(E)** is correct: *obloquy* is ill repute, censure, or blame from the general public.

(A) is incorrect because an *aspersion* is a damaging or derogatory remark. Theoretically, this could refer to things the public said about the real estate developer or his plan. However, this word is not strong enough to work in context since the prompt states that the developer received “outrage and opprobrium,” not merely mean comments.

(B) is incorrect because a *cavil* is a trivial and annoying objection. While the prompt does imply that the real estate developer received many objections, it does not imply that these objections were trivial.

(C) is incorrect because a *stigma* is a mark of infamy or disgrace. This word could work to describe what the real estate developer “received.” However, it is not strong enough to work well in context, as the prompt implies the developer received “public outrage,” not mere disgrace. Furthermore, a stigma does not necessarily arise from outrage. It can also be the result of a superstition or taboo, for instance.

(D) is incorrect because *adulation* is slavish flattery, the very opposite of the “public outrage” the real estate developer “received.”

2) **B**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. In this prompt, the two missing words share the same key word: “loyally.” The first missing word is something that Peter “expected” from his brother because he had “always loyally supported his brother.” Thus, the first missing word must mean loyalty, since one would expect loyalty in exchange for loyalty. The second missing word also hinges on “loyally” but has the opposite meaning, because the prompt implies that that Peter was “dismayed” at not getting what he expected. Thus, the second missing word must mean disloyal. Therefore, choice **(B)** is correct: *fealty* is loyalty, while *recreant* means disloyal or unfaithful.

(A) is incorrect because neither word works in context. In the prompt, the first word is supposed to mean loyalty, while the second word is supposed to mean disloyal. However, *treachery* is the opposite of loyalty, as treachery means

disloyalty or a betrayal of trust. *Apostate* means characteristic of one who forsakes his religion or cause. Thus, it does correctly imply that Peter's brother was disloyal, but it does not really work in context, since there is a difference between loyalty among people and an allegiance to a cause or religion.

(C) is incorrect because neither word works in context. In the prompt, the first word is supposed to mean loyalty, while the second word is supposed to mean disloyal. However, *sedition* is an act promoting disloyalty or rebellion. *Duplicitous* means deceitful in speech, but not necessarily disloyal. One can be disloyal without being deceitful and vice versa.

(D) is incorrect because neither word works in context. In the prompt, the first word is supposed to mean loyalty, while the second word is supposed to mean disloyal. However, *perfidy* is treachery or faithlessness, while *allegiant* means loyal. Thus, the two words would work if their order (and parts of speech) were flipped.

(E) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. In the prompt, the first word is supposed to mean loyalty, while the second word is supposed to mean disloyal. *Fidelity* means loyalty, so it could work in place of the first missing word. However, *steadfast* means unwavering and would thus be used to describe someone who remained loyal, not someone who acted disloyally.

3) **A**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. In this prompt, the key words are "mixed up the words." The prompt implies that, by mixing up the words, Daley made what the missing word describes. Thus, the missing word must mean a mixed-up expression or mistake of language. Thus, choice **(A)** is correct, since a *malapropism* is a humorous misuse of a word that sounds similar to another. It works here because Daley's mix-up was between two very similar words.

(B) is incorrect because a *solecism* is a nonstandard or ungrammatical usage. While it correctly describes a mistake of language, like the one Daley made, it does not describe the type of language mix up Daley made, since Daley "mixed up" similar-sounding words.

(C) is incorrect because a *vernacularism* is the use of plain, everyday language that is used by the natives of a certain area. For this word to work in context, the prompt would have to imply that most people in Chicago made the same type of grammatical mix-ups Daley made. However, the prompt does not imply that at all.

(D) is incorrect because *solipsism* is the theory that the self is the only entity that exists, but it can also refer to an egotistical self-absorption. In either case, it does not work in context because it does not describe mixing-up similar words.

(E) is incorrect because a *catachresis* is a misuse of words. While Daley did misuse words in his quotation, this is not the best answer choice. A *catachresis* could refer to any misuse of words and not necessarily a mix up of similar words like the one Daley made.

4) 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 “responsibility as his mother’s son,” a phrase that describes what Ada’s brother did not think he had. The missing word describes what Ada did think she had and is used to modify “duties,” which is synonymous with responsibilities. Ada’s feelings and her brother’s feelings are juxtaposed through the word “though,” which suggests contrast. Thus, while her brother feels he does not have responsibilities as a son, Ada feels she does have responsibilities or duties as a daughter. Therefore, the missing word must mean daughterly or befitting a child. Choice (E) is the best choice, since *filial* means pertaining to or befitting a son or daughter.

(A) is incorrect because *puerile* means childishly foolish or pertaining to childhood. Though it would correctly describe that Ada and her brother are their mother’s children, it could not be used to correctly refer to “duties” or “responsibility.”

(B) is incorrect because *callow* means inexperienced or immature. This would not be used to refer to the “duties” or “responsibilities” a child has to his or her mother.

(C) is incorrect because *fiduciary* refers to a relationship between a person who is legally entrusted with another’s property and the person who owns that property. While some children may have a fiduciary duty or responsibility from their parents, this prompt does not suggest that that is the case in Ada’s family. Rather, the prompt merely implies that Ada feels she has “duties” simply as her mother’s daughter, regardless of whether she has been legally or financially entrusted with those responsibilities.

(D) is incorrect because *culpable* means blameworthy. This word would not be used to refer to the “duties” or “responsibilities” a child has to his or her mother.

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 “arouse.” This word that describes what “watching” a cooking show can do to one’s appetite in the same way that the missing word describes what watching a travel show can “likewise” do to one’s desire to travel. Thus, the missing word must mean arouse. Choice (D) is, therefore, the correct answer, since *whet* means stimulate or make eager.

(A) is incorrect because *instigate* means incite to action. While this would correctly imply that “watching a travel show” could “arouse” one’s interest in traveling, it is a bit too extreme for this context. The prompt only implies that someone could have his or her interest in traveling piqued. It does not imply that watching the show would necessarily compel someone to travel.

(B) is incorrect because *foment* means promote growth. This word would correctly imply that “watching a travel show” can make one want to travel. However, it implies a much slower process than “arouse” would, since “foment” implies that the “desire to go on vacation” would grow over time, not be aroused instantly.

(C) is incorrect because *strop* literally means to sharpen a blade on a leather strap. This would not be used to describe a person’s desire to travel because it is too specific and does not have a common figurative usage.

(E) is incorrect because *goad* means incite to action. While this would correctly imply that “watching a travel show” could “arouse” one’s interest in traveling, it is a bit too extreme for this context. The prompt only implies that someone could have his or her interest in traveling piqued. It does not imply that watching the show would necessarily compel someone to travel.

6) C

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their meaning by using key words in the sentence. Here, both clauses relate to writers, so both missing words must be words that can describe writers or writing styles. The key word is “conversely,” a word that implies the clauses contrast each other. Thus, the two missing words must have opposite meanings. Hammett and Chandler must have different writing styles than Woolf and Faulkner. Because *pithy* means succinct and *periphrastic* means uses too many words, choice (C) is correct. This is the only answer choice that provides a set of antonyms.

(A) is incorrect because *compendious* means summarizing thoroughly and briefly. This does not form the proper relationship with *curt*, which means blunt or abrupt. These words are too closely related to be antonyms.

(B) is incorrect because *altruistic* means unselfish, and *turgid* means bloated. These words are completely unrelated.

(D) is incorrect because *succinct* means brief or concise. This does not form the proper relationship with *laconic*, which means using few words. These words are too closely related to be antonyms.

(E) is incorrect because *garrulous* means extremely talkative. This does not form the proper relationship with *verbose*, which means wordy. These words are too closely related to be antonyms.