



● Sentence Completion 17 *(high-advanced GRE level)*

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

1. Because of Dirkson's complicity in the conspiracy, many historians have insisted that he is as _____ as the actual assassin; however, recent evidence has suggested that Dirkson was not part of the conspiracy, which would _____ him.
A. reprehensible ... condemn
B. licentious ... absolve
C. culpable ... exonerate
D. pristine ... exculpate
E. vertiginous ... vindicate
2. To many outside observers, the dictator's fall from power was surprisingly _____; on the other hand, when one considers how long his reign lasted, the downfall could not have come soon enough.
A. audacious
B. lethargic
C. cursory
D. absolute
E. precipitate
3. Though the endocrinologist was terse when it came to meeting with patients, he was _____ when he was around friends and family.
A. brusque
B. bombastic
C. prolix
D. sententious
E. loquacious
4. After his death, his neighbors recalled that the curmudgeon never tried to socialize with any of them; thus, they were shocked to learn that the habitually _____ old man was once a great movie star.
A. introverted
B. asocial
C. cynical
D. eremitic
E. convivial
5. Because the executive burned all his incriminating files, it is impossible to know exactly what information they contained; nevertheless, it is not hard to _____ what was in the files, and, if nothing else, the arson suggests culpability.
A. infer
B. augur
C. confound
D. glean
E. cognize
6. The speech's purpose was to _____ popular support for Referendum 82, but, ironically, it _____ it.
A. suppress ... abated
B. reify ... invigorated
C. quell ... bolstered
D. abrogate ... vitiated
E. rejuvenate ... corroborated

Answers and Explanations

1) C

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. In this prompt, the key word is “however,” a word that introduces contrast between the two clauses. Both clauses also hinge on Dirkson’s “complicity” in the conspiracy, with the first clause stating that he was complicit and the second one saying the opposite. The missing words stem from his complicity or lack thereof, so, the words must have opposite meanings. Thus, choice **(C)** is the best choice, since *culpable* means guilty and *exonerate* means clears of blame.

(A) is incorrect because *reprehensible* means deserving of punishment. This does not form the proper opposite relationship with *condemn*, which means to pronounce guilty.

(B) is incorrect because *licentious* means sexually unrestrained. This does not form the proper opposite relationship with *absolve*, which means free from guilt or blame.

(D) is incorrect because *pristine* means uncorrupted. This does not form the proper opposite relationship with *exculpate*, which means free from guilt or blame.

(E) is incorrect because *vertiginous* means whirling or spinning. This does not form the proper opposite relationship with *vindicate*, which means free from accusation or suspicion.

2) E

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. The key words in this prompt are “could not have come soon enough,” a phrase used to describe how quickly “the dictator’s fall” came about. This phrase is separated from the missing word by the phrase “on the other hand,” which implies contrast. Thus, the missing word must imply that the dictator’s downfall was sudden or quick, rather than not fast enough. Because of this, the missing word must mean sudden, making choice **(E)** the right answer: *precipitate* means extremely sudden or quick.

(A) is incorrect because *audacious* means bold or fearless. This would not be used to describe the speed of the “dictator’s fall from power.”

(B) is incorrect because *lethargic* means lazy or very slow. This would be used to describe the relative speed of the “dictator’s fall” in the eyes of the narrator of the prompt, but not the speed viewed by “many outside observers” who saw it the opposite way.

(C) is incorrect because *cursorly* means hasty. Though this word correctly implies that the “dictator’s fall” occurred quickly, *cursorly* implies being done with little care to detail. The prompt gives no indication of how well thought-out the dictator’s fall was. Rather, the prompt only implies that “outside observers” thought it was done quickly.

(D) is incorrect because *absolute* means with finality. This would imply that the dictator would never return to power, but it does not have any connection to the speed of his fall from power. Thus, *absolute* does not work in context.

3) **E**

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 “terse,” a word that describes how the endocrinologist was around “patients.” The missing word describes how he was “around friends and family,” and the two concepts are joined together by a contrasting word, “though.” This implies that the two parts of this prompt present contradicting information. Thus, the missing word must mean the opposite of *terse*. Therefore, choice (E) is correct: *loquacious* means talkative.

(A) is incorrect because *brusque* means rough and abrupt in manner. This would, then, correctly imply how the endocrinologist was with “patients,” but not with “friends and family.”

(B) is incorrect because *bombastic* means pompous or using high-sounding but meaningless language. The prompt only implies that endocrinologist was not “terse” around his “friends and family.” It does not give any indication that he was pompous or bombastic.

(C) is incorrect because *prolix* means given to speaking at tedious lengths. While this correctly implies that the endocrinologist was more talkative with his “friends and family” than he was with “patients,” the prompt gives no indication that he was tedious.

(D) is incorrect because *sententious* means pithy and moralizing. This word might imply how the endocrinologist was around patients, since he was “terse.” However, nothing indicates that he was moralizing either with patients or “around friends and family.”

4) **B**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. This prompt provides several key words: “curmudgeon” and “never tried to socialize.” All of these words imply that the old man was unfriendly and hesitant to interact with his neighbors. Thus, the missing word must mean unfriendly or antisocial. The best answer choice, then, is choice (B), since *asocial* means unwilling to unable or unwilling to interact socially.

(A) is incorrect because *introverted* means shy. While one who is shy might not “socialize” with his neighbors, this word does not quite work in context. The prompt refers to the “old man” as a “curmudgeon,” a cantankerous or bad-tempered person. This means that, more than being merely shy, he was also mean.

(C) is incorrect because *cynical* means distrusting of others. While someone who is cynical may not be one to “socialize,” this word reflects how one feels about others, not how one interacts with them.

(D) is incorrect because *eremitic* means reclusive or hermetic. While a recluse or hermit would probably not be one to “socialize,” this answer choice does not work in context. The prompt gives no indication that the “curmudgeon” was necessarily reclusive. Furthermore, this answer choice does not relate to the curmudgeon’s meanness or bad temper.

(E) is incorrect because *convivial* means friendly. This would not be used to describe a “curmudgeon” who did not “socialize.”

5) A

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 in the phrase “it is impossible to know exactly what information they contained.” The missing word has to be a verb that relates to what was in the files. Since the clause with the missing word is separated from the first clause by the word “nevertheless,” it must have the opposite meaning of the first clause. Thus, the missing word must mean that it was possible to assume what information was in the files even though it was technically “impossible to know.” The missing word must mean predict, so choice (A) is correct. *Infer* means deduce or surmise.

(B) is incorrect because *augur* means to predict the future using omens or other mysticism. While this word refers to making an assumption or prediction about what was in the files, one can make these assumptions based on common sense and logic, not based on mystical omens.

(C) is incorrect because *confound* means baffle or perplex. This word does not work in context, since the missing word must imply that it was possible to assume what the files contained, not that the contents of the files were confusing.

(D) is incorrect because *glean* means learn or find out slowly. The prompt does not imply that one can ever truly learn “exactly what information” was in the files regardless of how long it would take to do so, so this word does not work in context.

(E) is incorrect because *cognize* means know. The prompt actually states that “it is impossible to know exactly what information” was in the files. Cognize does not

work in context, since it would imply that the information in the files could be known.

6) **C**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. Here, the key word is “ironically,” which implies “the speech” did not live up to its “purpose” and instead had the opposite effect on “support for Referendum 82.” Thus, the missing words must likewise have opposite meanings. Choice **(C)** is the right answer because *quell* means crush or subdue, and *bolstered* means added to, reinforced, or supported.

(A) is incorrect because *suppress* means repress or subdue. This does not form the proper opposite relationship with *abated*, which means decreased.

(B) is incorrect because *reify* means convert into a concrete thing. This does not form the proper opposite relationship with *invigorated*, which means increased in energy.

(D) is incorrect because *abrogate* means abolish by authority. This does not form the proper opposite relationship with *vitiated*, which means reduced in effectiveness.

(E) is incorrect because *rejuvenate* means restore to youthful vigor. This does not form the proper opposite relationship with *corroborated*, which means confirmed or verified.