



● Sentence Completion 19 *(high-advanced GRE level)*

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

1. The talk show host's improvised _____ at the end of his show proved amazingly popular with viewers; because of this, the producers decided to air a similar complaint at the end of every episode and make his rants a recurring segment.
A. onslaught
B. diatribe
C. eulogy
D. obloquy
E. ignominy
2. The accountant knew that the company could not sustain itself with its current income, since its _____ was just enough to cover expenses for two quarters in a row.
A. gross
B. arrearage
C. harvest
D. encumbrance
E. salary
3. The idea behind any institute of higher education is that _____ scholars shape the minds of neophyte students, and as a result, the students' minds become nearly as _____ as the professors'.
A. analytical ... daft
B. sagacious ... esoteric
C. keen ... cretinous
D. erudite ... perspicacious
E. astute ... puerile
4. Though thought to cure all illnesses, the medieval practice of bleeding actually _____ the patient; moreover, it often resulted in a lethal infection.
A. ameliorated
B. enervated
C. invigorated
D. refurbished
E. eviscerated
5. The sentiments expressed in the former IRA bomber's memoir constitute a final attempt at atonement; nonetheless, some readers still feel his sins are too great to ever truly be _____.
A. expurgated
B. begrudged
C. expiated
D. exculpated
E. redressed
6. Andre typically _____ on even the most mundane decisions, yet he was surprisingly _____ when it came to making major choices such as purchasing a house or choosing insurance policies for his family.
A. oscillated ... indecisive
B. trembled ... intrepid
C. asserted ... inflexible
D. procrastinated ... dilatory
E. wavered ... resolute

Answers and Explanations

1) 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 “complaint” and “rants,” which are used in the second clause of the sentence to replace of the missing word. The complaints and rants are “similar” to the thing the host did at the end of his show. Thus, the missing word must refer to a vehement complaint. Thus, choice **(B)** is correct: a *diatribe* is a bitter verbal attack or rant.

(A) is incorrect because an *onslaught* is a vigorous attack or assault. While this could theoretically refer to a “complaint,” its meaning is too broad to work in context. An onslaught could be a verbal or physical attack.

(C) is incorrect because a *eulogy* is a speech of praise, especially for someone who has died. This would not work in context for referring to a “complaint.”

(D) is incorrect because *obloquy* is censure or abusive language, especially when employed by a large number of people. Thus, while this word does correctly imply that the talk show host launched a “complaint,” obloquy is not the best word to use. In this context, only one person made a complaint.

(E) is incorrect because *ignominy* is disgrace or dishonor. This word would mean the host brought disgrace to himself, but the prompt only means to say that he voiced displeasure at something.

2) A

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 “income.” The missing word likewise describes the amount of money coming into the company, an amount that “was just enough to cover expenses.” Thus, the missing word must mean income, and, because of this, choice **(A)** is the correct answer. *Gross* is the total income before deductions.

(B) is incorrect because *arrears* is the state of being in debt. The prompt does not imply that the company was in debt, though, since it was able “to cover expenses” without owing money.

(C) is incorrect because a *harvest* is a form of income, but it is generally used to discuss agricultural crops, not money. It does not work in context here because the prompt is about the “income” of a company, not a farm or farmer.

(D) is incorrect because an *encumbrance* is a burden. This word cannot be used in place of “income.”

(E) is incorrect because a *salary* is a fixed compensation paid to a worker. Thus, while it describes a form of “income,” its meaning is too limited to work in context here. The prompt refers to the income of a “company,” not an individual worker.

3) **D**

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 words can only be used to determine the relationship between the missing words. The relationship hinges on the phrases “as a result” and “become nearly as.” These suggest that there is direct continuity between the two missing words. The second missing word derives from the first, since it has “nearly” the same meaning. *Erudite* means learned and *perspicacious* means keen or shrewd. Both of these words relate to intelligence, so choice (D) is the correct answer.

(A) is incorrect because *analytical* means able to analyze or study. This does not form the proper relationship with *daft*, which means stupid or foolish.

(B) is incorrect because *sagacious* means wise. This does not form the proper relationship with *esoteric*, which means understood only by a learned few. The second missing word refers to the “minds” of students, and the prompt does not imply that the mind of a student can only be understood by a few. Rather, it means to imply that their minds are as sharp or intelligent as the wise professors’ minds.

(C) is incorrect because *keen* means perceptive. This does not form the proper relationship with *cretinous*, which means stupid or mentally defective.

(E) is incorrect because *astute* means having good judgment. This does not form the proper relationship with *puerile*, which means childishly foolish.

4) **B**

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 “thought to cure all illnesses,” which describes what people believed about the “medieval practice of bleeding.” However, the words “though” and “actually” indicate that the practice had the opposite effect of what was expected. The missing word describes what the “practice of bleeding” actually did to patients, so it must mean weaken. Therefore, choice (B) is correct, since *enervated* means sapped or weakened.

(A) is incorrect because *ameliorated* means improved or made better. This could describe the intended effect of “bleeding” but not the actual effect.

(C) is incorrect because *invigorated* means energized. This has the complete opposite meaning of the missing word.

(D) is incorrect because *refurbished* means repaired or freshened up. This has the complete opposite meaning of the missing word.

(E) is incorrect because *eviscerated* means disemboweled or removed vital organs by force. This word is too strong to work in the context of the prompt.

5) C

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 “attempt at atonement,” which explains the purpose of “the sentiments expressed in the former IRA bomber’s memoir”. The missing word describes something that “some readers” feel cannot be done because the writer’s “sins are too great.” Because the writer is attempting to atone for his sins, the missing word must likewise mean atone. Therefore, choice (C) is the correct answer, since *expiated* means make amends.

(A) is incorrect because *expurgated* means censored or removed offensive materials. It does not work in context because the prompt discusses the memoirist’s “attempt at atonement,” not his attempt to censor his past.

(B) is incorrect because *begrudged* means resented or looked upon with disapproval. This is the opposite of what is implied by the prompt, since the memoirist is attempting “atonement.”

(D) is incorrect because *exculpated* means cleared from blame. While the prompt implies the memoirist wishes to atone for his past, it does not suggest he wishes to be cleared from blame. Rather, the prompt implies that he his memoir serves as a confession or admission of guilt.

(E) is incorrect because *redressed* means remedied. It would imply that the memoirist was not merely seeking atonement or attempting to make amends, but that he was also trying to correct his past mistakes. The prompt does not give enough information to support such a charge.

6) E

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words in the prompt. In this prompt, the key words are “decisions,” “yet” and “surprisingly.” The first of these words is important because both missing words describe Andre’s actions in regard to making decisions. The latter two key words are important because they give the relationship between the missing words. Both suggest that the second missing word contrasts with the first missing word. Thus, the correct answer choice involves words that have something to do with making decisions, and they must be opposites of each other. Because *wavered* means showed indecision and *resolute* means determined or certain, choice (E) is the right answer.

(A) is incorrect because *oscillated* means moved back and forth. This does not form the proper relationship with *indecisive*, which means unable to make up one's mind.

(B) is incorrect because *trembled* means shook with fear. This forms the proper relationship with *intrepid*, which means brave, but the words do not work in context. Neither necessarily relates to making "decisions."

(C) is incorrect because *asserted* means stated confidently. This does not form the proper relationship with *inflexible*, which means rigid or nonmalleable.

(D) is incorrect because *procrastinated* means delayed. This does not form the proper relationship with *dilatory*, which means intended to delay.