



● Sentence Completion 6 (high-advanced GRE level)

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

1. Though not as lithe as she once was, the aging gymnastics instructor was still more _____ than the average person.
 - A. malleable
 - B. dainty
 - C. statuesque
 - D. lissome
 - E. calcified
2. Candy was such a fast learner that her _____ was significantly shorter than average; likewise, she rose from basic competence to _____ at an accelerated pace.
 - A. novitiate ... preeminence
 - B. adroitness ... prowess
 - C. internment ... sufficiency
 - D. neophytism ... propitiousness
 - E. apprenticeship ... providence
3. Afraid of being stung, I was incredibly nervous about the _____ of the bee, but once it left my immediate area, I was able to enjoy the rest of the picnic.
 - A. purview
 - B. ambit
 - C. propinquity
 - D. palpability
 - E. peril
4. To J. Edgar Hoover, Communism was the most vile, evil thing imaginable; thus, he exhausted much of the FBI's resources in hunting down the supposedly _____ Communist agents that he believed were threatening the United States.
 - A. heterodox
 - B. misanthropic
 - C. magnanimous
 - D. nefarious
 - E. pulchritudinous
5. Sadie's _____ caused others to assume that she disliked them; strangers often mistook her shyness for animosity.
 - A. superciliousness
 - B. diffidence
 - C. braggadocio
 - D. terseness
 - E. timorousness
6. The most important thing to consider when telling a lie is that it must have _____; if the _____ is not plausible, no one will ever believe it.
 - A. believability ... exaggeration
 - B. inexplicability ... mendacity
 - C. feasibility ... hyperbole
 - D. candor ... axiom
 - E. verisimilitude ... prevarication

Answers and Explanations

1) D

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 word is “lithe,” which describes how the gymnastics instructor “once was.” The prompt hinges on the word “though,” which implies contrast between the two clauses of the sentence. In this case, the contrast is not that great, because the sentence implies that the gymnastics instructor is still comparatively lithe. Thus, the missing word means lithe. Choice **(D)** is correct: *lissome* means flexible or lithe.

(A) is incorrect because *malleable* means adaptable or formable by an outside force. While it does imply a degree of flexibility, it does not work in context for describing the flexibility of the human body.

(B) is incorrect because *dainty* means small or delicate, a word that is not necessarily synonymous with “lithe.”

(C) is incorrect because *statuesque* means majestically beautiful or shapely. Someone who is “lithe” may or may not be beautiful or shapely. The prompt does not give enough information to support this answer choice.

(E) is incorrect because *calcified* means hardened. The prompt implies that “the aging gymnastics instructor” is still relatively flexible and lithe, not hardened or stiffened.

2) A

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. In this prompt, each missing word has its own key words. The first missing word depends on the phrase “such a fast learner.” The first clause of this sentence has a cause-and-effect relationship. It explains that because Candy learned quickly, something was shorter. As such, the missing word must mean learning period, because one who learns fast would have a shorter learning period. The second missing word hinges on the word “competence” as well as the verb “rose.” The missing word describes what Candy rose to, so it must be something higher or better than “basic competence.” Thus, the second missing word must mean superior mastery. The best answer choice, then, is choice **(A)**. *Novitiate* means the period or state of being an amateur, while *preeminence* is the state of being superior to or more eminent than others. The prompt would then imply that Candy was only an amateur for a short period before she reached competence and even superiority in her field.

(B) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. *Prowess* is high skill, which means it would describe something higher than “basic competence.” However, “adroitness” is also expert skill, so it could not refer to the period in which Candy first learned her skills.

(C) is incorrect because neither word works in context. *Internment* is confinement as a prisoner, something that has nothing to do with being a “fast learner.” *Sufficiency* is adequacy, not a quality that reflects a higher level of mastery than “basic competence.”

(D) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Neophytism* is the state of being new at something, so it works for describing Candy’s learning period. However, *propitiousness* is favorability or auspiciousness. This word does not necessarily reflect a higher level of mastery than “basic competence,” since auspiciousness and mastery are not synonymous.

(E) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Apprenticeship* is the period of learning a trade through work with an expert. This word could accurately describe Candy’s learning period. However, *providence* is foresight, not something that depends on one rising from “basic competence.”

3) **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 “my immediate area,” which describes where the bee was when the narrator of the prompt was “incredibly nervous” and “afraid.” The missing word describes the aspect of the bee that made the narrator nervous, while the rest of the prompt explains how the narrator became less nervous. The missing word must mean nearness or proximity, since the narrator was less nervous when the bee was no longer nearby. Choice **(C)** is, thus, the correct choice, because *propinquity* means nearness.

(A) is incorrect because *purview* is the range of vision or control. This word would imply that the narrator was concerned about what the bee could see or control. This word is too specific to work in context. The narrator was merely nervous that the bee was nearby.

(B) is incorrect because *ambit* refers to boundaries or limits. It does not work in context, since it would imply that the narrator was nervous due to bee’s limitations and not its proximity to her.

(D) is incorrect because *palpability* is the ability of something to be touched. Though this could imply being in one’s “immediate area,” the prompt does not go so far as to suggest the narrator is touching or attempting to touch the bee or vice versa.

(E) is incorrect because *peril* is danger or potential harmfulness. The narrator was indeed “afraid of being stung,” but unless she was terribly allergic to bee stings, she probably would not have considered a bee sting to be perilous. This word is too severe to work in context. Furthermore, the prompt implies that the

narrator was nervous because the bee was in his or her “immediate area.” Peril does not refer to closeness or proximity.

4) **D**

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 “vile” and “evil,” adjectives that are used to describe Hoover’s perceptions of “Communism.” The missing word likewise describes his perceptions of “Communist agents,” so the missing word must likewise mean vile or evil. Thus, choice **(D)** is the correct answer, since *nefarious* means vicious or evil.

(A) is incorrect because *heterodox* means not in agreement with standard or established practices or beliefs. Even though Hoover believed that Communism was heterodoxy, this is not the strongest answer choice. Heterodox is not necessarily synonymous with “vile” or “evil.”

(B) is incorrect because *misanthropic* means hating or mistrusting humankind. The prompt only implies that Hoover believed Communists were “vile” and “evil,” not that they inherently hated mankind. Misanthropy and evil are not synonymous.

(C) is incorrect because *magnanimous* means extremely generous. This would not describe Hoover’s perception of Communists, since he believed they were “vile” and “evil.”

(E) is incorrect because *pulchritudinous* means beautiful. This would not describe Hoover’s perception of Communists, since he believed they were “vile” and “evil.”

5) **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 word is “shyness,” which the prompt states is often mistaken for “animosity.” The missing word is likewise mistaken for animosity, as the missing word describes something that caused others to assume that Sadie “disliked them.” Thus, the missing word must mean shyness. Therefore, choice **(B)** is correct because *diffidence* is hesitation in speaking to others due to a lack of self-confidence.

(A) is incorrect because *superciliousness* is the quality of being haughtily arrogant or disdainful. It would therefore describe how others may have seen Sadie, but not how she actually was.

(C) is incorrect because *braggadocio* is empty bragging. If Sadie made empty boasts or brags often, it would be an example of her arrogance, not of her “shyness” or lack of confidence.

(D) is incorrect because *terseness* is succinctness or brevity. Being brief or laconic, though, does not necessarily mean one is shy. Someone could be confident and simply prefer brief sentences, for instance. This word is not the best choice to use in this prompt.

(E) is incorrect because *timorousness* is the quality of being fearful or timid. While someone who exhibits “shyness” might be fearful, the two qualities are not necessarily synonymous. Shyness could be caused by a lack of confidence rather than an inherent fear.

6) **E**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. In this prompt, each missing word has its own key words. The first missing word’s key word is “plausible.” Both this word and the first missing word describe what qualities a good lie must have in order to convince others to “believe it.” The second missing word’s key word is “lie,” since the second missing word is used in place of “telling a lie” in the second clause. Thus, the first missing word must mean plausibility while the second one must mean lie. Choice **(E)** is the correct answer, since *verisimilitude* is the appearance of truth and a *prevarication* is a lie.

(A) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Believability* is the possibly of being accepted as true, so it is a quality that a good “lie” has to have. However, an *exaggeration* is an overstatement. It is not quite a “lie,” but rather a distortion of the truth.

(B) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. *Mendacity* is falsehood or lies, so it would work in place of the word “lie” in the second clause. However, *inexplicability* is the inability to account for or explain something. Thus, it cannot be used to explain something that is “plausible.”

(C) is incorrect because neither word works in context. *Feasibility* is the ability of something to be accomplished. This is not synonymous with “plausible,” believable, or possibly true. Secondly, a *hyperbole* is an overstatement, meaning it is not quite a “lie,” but rather a distortion of the truth.

(D) is incorrect because neither word works in context. *Candor* is frankness or sincerity, a word that has nothing to do with being “plausible,” believable, or possibly true. An *axiom* is a self-evident truth, the very opposite of a “lie.”