



● Sentence Completion 7 (*high-advanced GRE level*)

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

1. Though famous for his caustic reviews of others' prose, the critic himself was hurt when he read equally _____ reviews of his collection of short stories.
 - A. mordacious
 - B. equitable
 - C. putrid
 - D. barbarous
 - E. lauding
2. The executive seemed to think his orchestration of the ponzi scheme was a mere _____; as a result, the judge sentenced him to the harshest sentence possible so that others like him would understand the gravity of his crimes.
 - A. transgression
 - B. peccadillo
 - C. faux pas
 - D. impropriety
 - E. abomination
3. John D. Rockefeller was arguably the first true American industrial _____, and to this day, he is commonly noted among the most famous _____ in history.
 - A. mogul...marvels
 - B. father...progenies
 - C. principal...cetaceans
 - D. captain...pygmies
 - E. magnate...tycoons
4. America is often described as a diverse nation of immigrants; however, the nineteenth century was marked by the spread of _____ among white Americans who feared their non-Anglo counterparts would come to dominate American society.
 - A. apartheid
 - B. benevolence
 - C. xenophobia
 - D. ignorance
 - E. chauvinism
5. Amos knew that theft was illegal; nevertheless, he wanted a television he couldn't afford, so he broke the law and _____ one from an electronics store.
 - A. filched
 - B. pillaged
 - C. misappropriated
 - D. acquired
 - E. defalcated
6. Chris knew that Sylvia had a reputation for being a _____; in fact, it was her flirtatiousness that first attracted him to her.
 - A. strumpet
 - B. vamp
 - C. harlot
 - D. coquette
 - E. siren

Answers and Explanations

1) 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 word is “caustic,” a word that describes the critic’s “reviews of others’ prose.” The missing word also describes “reviews,” this time about the critic’s own prose (short stories). However, the prompt makes clear these reviews are similar, as it calls the reviews “equally _____. ” Thus, the missing word must also mean caustic, making choice **(A)** the correct answer, since *mordacious* means biting or caustic.

(B) is incorrect because *equitable* means fair or reasonable. This would not be used to describe a “caustic” or negative review.

(C) is incorrect because *putrid* means rotten or extremely low-quality. Nothing in the prompt indicates anything about the quality of any of the “reviews” themselves. They are all described as negative or “caustic,” but this does not mean that they were low-quality.

(D) is incorrect because *barbarous* means savagely cruel or harsh. This could almost work in context, but “caustic” merely implies that the reviews were harsh, not necessarily cruel.

(E) is incorrect because *lauding* means praising or extolling, the very opposite of a review that is “caustic.”

2) B

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. The key word here “gravity,” which describes how the judge viewed the executive’s “ponzi scheme.” The prompt, however, implies that the “executive” disagreed with the judge and viewed the crime as something without much gravity. Thus, the missing word means a non-serious crime. Choice **(B)** is the best choice: a *peccadillo* is a minor offense.

(A) is incorrect because a *transgression* is any breaking of the law. It does not work in context because it does not have any gradation of meaning. The prompt requires a word that shows that the “executive” believed his crime was a minor offense. Transgression is too general to work in context.

(C) is incorrect because a *faux pas* is a social blunder. A “ponzi scheme” is not a mere social blunder. It is a serious crime.

(D) is incorrect because an *impropriety* is an act of incorrectness or misbehavior. It does not work in context because it does not have any gradation of meaning. The prompt requires a word that shows that the “executive” believed his crime

was a minor offense. Impropriety is too general to work in context, since it does not even necessarily refer to a criminal offense.

(E) is incorrect because an *abomination* is something that is extremely disliked or abhorred. This would describe the judge's view of the executive's scheme but the not the executive's view of it.

3) **E**

To figure out what the missing word is, we need to find words that fill the first and second blanks so that they form a logical relationship. Here, the key word is "magnate," a word that describes Rockefeller's stature in "American industry." The missing word likewise describes Rockefeller's stature in the "business" world, so it too must mean magnate. Of the answer choices, only choice (E) provides a word that means giant: a *tycoon* is a business person of great wealth and power.

(A) is incorrect. Although Rockefeller may be a

(B) is incorrect because *progenies* are descendants or offspring. This word cannot be used in place of the word "magnate," because there is no relationship between the two. Furthermore, the prompt does not mention Rockefeller's family at all.

(C) is incorrect because *cetaceans* are large aquatic mammals, such as whales or dolphins. This word could theoretically work in a metaphorical sense, but it is clearly not a strong choice to use in this context. Choice (E)'s word does not require metaphorical usage only.

(D) is incorrect because *pygmies* are small or dwarfish people, while the term "magnate" makes no reference to physical size.

4) **C**

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 sentence are in the phrase "diverse nation of immigrants." Because the word "however" implies a contrast between the two clauses of the sentence, the missing word must have the opposite meaning of diverse and welcoming to immigrants. Choice (C) is the best choice: *xenophobia* is fear or hatred of strangers or foreigners.

(A) is incorrect because *apartheid* is segregation, especially referring to race. While there was indeed a period of racial segregation in America, there is not enough information in the prompt specifically to support this word. It is therefore not the strongest answer choice.

(B) is incorrect because *benevolence* is charitableness or goodwill. As such, this is the very opposite of what the prompt implies “white” or “Anglo” Americans showed to the “immigrant groups” they “feared.”

(D) is incorrect because *ignorance* is a lack of education or information. Though anti-immigrant fears can be described as ignorant, this word implies a certain judgment or bias that most standardized test try to avoid. There is no evidence in the prompt to prove definitively that those who harbored “fear” about immigration were ignorant.

(E) is incorrect because *chauvinism* is biased devotion to any group or cause. While this could describe Anglo-Americans in the nineteenth century, it does not have the same fear-based relationship that the prompt implies. For chauvinism to apply in context, the prompt would have to mention not the fear of others but, rather the self-pride of the Anglo-Americans.

5) **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 word is “theft,” which describes an act Amos knew was “illegal.” The missing word describes what Amos did when he “broke the law.” The prompt indicates that Amos knew that theft was illegal but nevertheless wanted to get a television “he couldn’t afford.” So, the missing word must mean take or steal. Therefore, choice **(A)** is correct, since *filched* means stole.

(B) is incorrect because *pillaged* means stripped ruthlessly through violence. It usually refers to seizing property during war, but there is no indication in the prompt that Amos’s “theft” at the electronics store was violent or war-related. Thus, pillage has too specific of a meaning to work in this particular context.

(C) is incorrect because *misappropriated* means put to a wrong use. This usually refers to the act of taking funds marked for one purpose and using them for a personal purpose. Thus, while misappropriation is a form of theft, it is not synonymous with the type of “theft” committed by Amos.

(D) is incorrect because *acquired* means got or obtained, but not necessarily through “theft.” Thus, while Amos ultimately did acquire a television, this word is too general to explain the fact that Amos stole the television.

(E) is incorrect because *defalcated* means misused entrusted property or funds. Thus, in order for Amos to have defalcated a television, he would have had to have been entrusted with the care of the television set in the store in the first place. The prompt gives no indication that this was the case. Rather, it implies that he committed a “theft.”

6) **D**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. The key word in this prompt is “flirtatiousness.” Since the missing word describes something Sylvia “had a reputation for being,” and all that is known about her is that she is flirtatious, she must have a reputation for being a flirt. Thus, the missing word must mean flirt. Choice **(D)** is the correct answer, since a *coquette* is a woman who flirts.

(A) is incorrect because a *strumpet* is a prostitute, though the prompt does not give any indication that Sylvia is a prostitute. “Flirtatiousness” is not synonymous with prostitution, and flirting in no way indicates that a person is a prostitute.

(B) is incorrect because a *vamp* is a seductive woman who exploits men by using her sensuality. The prompt only goes so far as to say that Sylvia was given to “flirtatiousness,” and it does not imply that she used Christopher in any way. Thus, vamp is too narrow in meaning to work in this prompt.

(C) is incorrect because a *harlot* is a prostitute, though the prompt does not give any indication that Sylvia is a prostitute. “Flirtatiousness” is not synonymous with prostitution, and flirting in no way indicates that a person is a prostitute.

(E) is incorrect because a *siren* is a seductively beautiful woman. The prompt only states that Sylvia was given to “flirtatiousness,” and it does not imply that she is necessarily seductive or beautiful. There is not enough evidence in the prompt to support this answer choice.