



● Sentence Completion 8 *(high-advanced GRE level)*

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

1. Much of the Port Huron Statement involves seemingly _____ ideas; similarly, many other political manifestos of the 1960s seem overly idealistic.
A. recalcitrant
B. Pollyanna
C. theoretical
D. chimerical
E. altruistic
2. Because Xavier was known for making _____ statements, the rest of the class was not surprised that he would say something so utterly juvenile and inane.
A. callow
B. sophomoric
C. guileless
D. perfidious
E. puerile
3. The houseguests were understandably distressed by the toilet's clogged _____; their anxiety notwithstanding, clearing the blocked pipe required a relatively simple, inoffensive operation.
A. aqueduct
B. cloaca
C. latrine
D. conduit
E. estuary
4. John Gotti was among the most _____ mob bosses of all time; his _____ garnered him the attention that criminals generally avoid.
A. derelict ... opulence
B. meretricious ... humility
C. elegant ... gaudiness
D. ostentatious ... flamboyance
E. timorous ... brazenness
5. The _____ of Max's younger life was his graduation from law school; likewise, the _____ of his older life was witnessing his daughter's own graduation from law school.
A. apogee ... zenith
B. peak ... mortification
C. acme ... nadir
D. meridian ... terminus
E. apex ... calamity
6. Any job-seeker can learn from the fictional Don Quixote: he wished to become a knight, so he acted _____, just as most successful people know that the first step to becoming a professional is to act professionally.
A. dauntlessly
B. pusillanimously
C. chivalrously
D. timorously
E. munificently

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 “overly idealistic,” a phrase that describes how “political manifestos of the 1960s” seem today. The missing word likewise describes how a 1960s political manifesto, “the Port Huron Statement,” seems today. Thus, the missing word must also mean overly idealistic. Choice **(B)** is the correct choice, since *Pollyanna* means overly optimistic or idealistic.

(A) is incorrect because *recalcitrant* means disobedient or resistant to authority. Though many political activists in the 1960s were indeed anti-authority, the prompt specifically addresses the “overly idealistic” ideas in their writings. This is not the strongest answer choice because it does not address the idealism mentioned in the prompt.

(C) is incorrect because *theoretical* means existing only in theory. In context, this word is a somewhat redundant way of saying that ideas in the Statement were not being applied in practice. However, this does not necessarily mean that the ideas were unrealistic in an “idealistic” or overly optimistic way. This is not the strongest answer choice because it does not address the idealism mentioned in the prompt.

(D) is incorrect because *chimerical* means highly unrealistic. It does not, however, mean highly unrealistic in an “idealistic” or overly optimistic way. Chimerical is too specific and strong to work in this context.

(E) is incorrect because *altruistic* means unselfishly concerned with the welfare of others. Altruism is not necessarily “overly idealistic,” however. There is not enough evidence in the prompt to support this answer choice.

2) **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 “juvenile and inane,” adjectives used to describe something Xavier said. The missing word describes the type of “statements” he is “known for making.” The prompt explains that one of his juvenile and inane statements in particular was not surprising to the rest of the class. Since customarily make childish statements, the missing word must mean childish, nonsensical, or inane. Therefore, choice **(E)** is the correct answer, since *puerile* means childishly foolish.

(A) is incorrect because *callow* means inexperienced. It might describe Xavier himself, given that he is accustomed to saying “juvenile” things, but it could not be used to describe the kinds of “statements” he makes. A statement cannot be experienced or inexperienced.

(B) is incorrect because *sophomoric* means intellectually pretentious but actually immature. The prompt only implies that Xavier makes “juvenile and inane” statements, not statements that are at all pretentious.

(C) is incorrect because *guileless* means sincere. This would not necessarily describe “statements” that are “juvenile and inane.”

(D) is incorrect because *perfidious* means deceitful. This would not be used to describe “statements” that are “juvenile and inane.”

3) **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 “pipe,” a word that is used in place of the missing word later in the sentence. Thus, the missing word must also mean pipe or passageway, so choice **(D)** is correct: a *conduit* is a means through which something, usually water, is transmitted.

(A) is incorrect because an *aqueduct* is a man-made structure used to transfer water over great distances. Even though this word refers to a waterway, it does not work in the narrow context of this prompt, since a “toilet” does not transport water very far.

(B) is incorrect because a *cloaca* is an ancient sewer, not an individual “pipe.”

(C) is incorrect because a *latrine* is a toilet or something used as a toilet (for example, a trench). It does not work in context, since the prompt would mean that the “toilet” had a “clogged toilet,” which is a grammatically illogical and redundant.

(E) is incorrect because an *estuary* is the part of the mouth of a river that joins the river tide to sea. Though this word refers to waterway, it does not work in the context of this prompt. This prompt is about a “toilet,” not a river.

4) **D**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definition by using key words from the prompt. In this prompt, it is not possible to predict the definitions of the words, but their relationship can be predicted because of the semicolon. A semicolon (;) is a punctuation mark that connects two independent but related clauses. This means that the two missing words must be similar in meaning, since the clauses that contain them are related. Thus, the correct answer should give a pair of closely related words. The correct answer is therefore choice **(D)**, since *ostentatious* means showy or garish, and *flamboyance* is striking boldness or showiness.

(A) is incorrect because the two words are near-antonyms. *Derelict* means abandoned or run-down, especially when referring to a building or other piece of

property. *Opulence* is wealth, riches, or luxury. Not only would Gotti, a person, not be described like an abandoned building, but this idea clashes with the concept of riches and wealth.

(B) is incorrect because *meretricious* is vulgar or pretentious showiness, and *humility* is the quality of being humble or modest. A showy person cannot be described as humble or modest. These two words are near-antonyms.

(C) is incorrect because *elegant* means tasteful or high-quality, and *gaudiness* is cheap or tasteless showiness. A tasteful person cannot be described as tasteless. These two words are near-antonyms.

(E) is incorrect because *timorous* means fearful or timid, and *brazenness* is shamelessness or insolent audaciousness. A timid person usually cannot be described as audacious. These two words are near-antonyms.

5) **A**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. In this prompt, it is not possible to predict the definitions of the words, but their relationship can be predicted by using the key word “likewise.” This word explains that the two words are similar in meaning, since both words refer to similar events in Max’s life. Thus, the correct answer should give a pair of synonyms. Only choice **(A)** does so: both *apogee* and *zenith* mean the highest point.

(B) is incorrect because the two words are not synonyms. A *peak* is the highest point, but *mortification* is a feeling of humiliation or shame. These words are closer to antonyms than they are to the synonyms the prompt requires.

(C) is incorrect because the two words are not synonyms. An *acme* is the highest point or peak, but a *nadir* is the lowest point of despair. Thus, these words are opposites of each other, though the prompt requires two words with similar meanings.

(D) is incorrect because the two words are not synonyms. A *meridian* is a high point of development, but a *terminus* is an end or extremity. While a terminus could be the upper extremity of something, it could also be the low boundary, so these two words are not necessarily related.

(E) is incorrect because the two words are not synonyms. An *apex* is a climax or peak, but a *calamity* is a great misfortune or disaster. Thus, these words are opposites of each other, though the prompt requires two words with similar meanings.

6) **C**

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 the phrase “the first step to becoming a professional is to act professionally.” The prompt states that this is similar to what Don Quixote did. The missing word describes how Don Quixote “acted” in order to “become a knight.” In order to make a parallel relationship with the idea of becoming a professional by acting professionally, the missing word must mean knight-like. Choice **(C)** is the correct answer, since *chivalrously* means acting with chivalry, and chivalry is the ideal qualification of a knight.

(A) is incorrect because *dauntlessly* means fearlessly. While part of being a “knight” is being fearless, it is not the defining or foremost trait of a knight. Thus, choice (A) is not the best answer.

(B) is incorrect because *pusillanimously* means cowardly. This would not describe the actions of one who wanted to be a “knight,” since most knights are not cowards.

(D) is incorrect because *timorously* means fearfully. This word would not describe the actions of someone who wanted to be a “knight,” since most knights are brave.

(E) is incorrect because *munificently* means generously. While being a “knight” might involve being generous and helpful to others, this is not the defining or foremost trait of a knight. Thus, choice (E) is not the best answer.