• Sentence Completion 1  Level 12

Directions: Complete the sentence using the word or set of words for each blank that best fits the meaning of the sentence as a whole.

1. Under the ______ of their mother, the newborn kittens knew they were protected, since any predator would have to harm their mother before it could get to them.

   A. aegis
   B. negligence
   C. truancy
   D. apostasy
   E. primogeniture

2. In the decade after the revolution, the new government seemed to ______ and was never quite ______; this period ultimately led to a second revolution in which the current ruling party took power.

   A. careen ... ephemeral
   B. fortify ... faltering
   C. waver ... flimsy
   D. coagulate ... tenable
   E. totter ... stable

3. Despite his ______ upbringing, Vladimir proved quite adept at navigating city life.

   A. urbane
   B. acrid
   C. bucolic
   D. cosmopolitan
   E. harsh

4. Macbeth received what he thought was ______ prediction from three witches, but his attempts to make the auspicious portents come true tragically failed in the end.

   A. an ominous
   B. a momentous
   C. a lamentable
   D. a sinister
   E. a propitious

5. The clownfish eats organisms that could potentially harm the sea anemone, while the anemone provides the clownfish with a safe shelter; both organisms benefit from this ______ relationship.

   A. docile
   B. disjointed
   C. amenable
   D. symbiotic
   E. contrary

6. Because the boy had told so many ______ tales about seeing wolves, none of the villagers believed him when he actually did see a wolf.

   A. fallacious
   B. verifiable
   C. scrupulous
   D. fictitious
   E. concrete
Answers and Explanations

1)  
To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using keywords from the prompt. Here, the keywords are in the phrase “any predator would have to harm their mother before it could get to them,” a phrase that is used to explain why the kittens felt protected. The missing word is also part of a phrase that explains why the kittens felt protected, so it must have a similar meaning. Thus, the missing word must be one that implies the mother is protecting her young. Because aegis is protection or support, choice (A) is correct.

(B) is incorrect because negligence is the act of not caring for something or someone properly. As such, this word has the opposite meaning of the missing word, since the missing word should imply that the kittens were protected by the mother.

(C) is incorrect because truancy is the act of shirking or neglecting one’s duties. As such, this word has the opposite meaning of the missing word, since the missing word should imply that the kittens were protected by the mother.

(D) is incorrect because apostasy is a departure of one’s principles or religious beliefs. Cats don’t have principles or beliefs, so they cannot engage in apostasy.

(E) is incorrect because primogeniture is the inheritance of wealth by the eldest child in a family. The prompt does not imply that the mother cat only helps her oldest kitten; she helps and protects all her kittens. Furthermore, cats do not pass on wealth from generation to generation as humans do.

2)  
To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using keywords from the prompt. Here, the only keywords are those between the missing words, the phrase “and was never quite.” This phrase sets up the two missing words as opposites of each other. For more specific clues to help predict the meaning of these words, the prompt provides evidence that this government did not last, leading "to a second revolution." Therefore, the missing words must relate to a lack of stability or permanence of the government. The first word must mean impermanent, while the second means permanence. Totter means to sway as if about to fall, while stable means steady and constant. Together, these words suggest that the government seemed to sway and was never quite steady, leading to a second revolution. This makes logical sense, so choice (E) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. Careen means to lean or sway. This could describe what the new government seemed to do. However, ephemeral means brief, which accurately describes the new government, but does not work after the modifier “never.” If the government were not ephemeral, then it would have lasted longer than a decade before being overthrown.

(B) is incorrect because neither word works in context. Fortify means to make something stronger, while faltering means stumbling. These words would work in the opposite order but not in the given order.

(C) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. Waver means to sway or shift, which could describe what the “new government” did. However, flimsy means without strength or solidity, and the new government would not be described as “never flimsy.”

(D) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. Coagulate means to harden, though the prompt implies that “the new government” never became strong. However, tenable means able to be held or defended, so this word correctly describes a characteristic that the “new government” never had.

3)  
To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using keywords from the prompt. Here, the keywords are found in the phrase “quite adept at navigating city life,” which is used to describe Vladimir. The prompt implies that this ability is surprising, since the prompt hinges on the word “despite.” This word sets up a contrasting relationship. Thus, the missing word must mean the opposite of city life, implying that Vladimir’s upbringing was rural, not urban. Therefore, choice (C) is correct, since bucolic means idyllic or rural.

(A) is incorrect because urbane means suave or sophisticated. This word can be associated with city life, so it would not make sense to say Vladimir was “adept at navigating city life” “despite” such an upbringing.

(B) is incorrect because acid means sharp or bitter. There is not enough evidence in the prompt to suggest that Vladimir had a rough or hard upbringing. The prompt merely suggests that he did not grow up in a city.

(D) is incorrect because cosmopolitan means worldly or not given to provincial tastes or prejudices. In other words, it would describe Vladimir’s later life but not his upbringing.

(E) is incorrect because harsh means grimly unpleasant or severe. There is not enough evidence in the prompt to suggest that Vladimir had a rough or hard upbringing. The prompt merely suggests that he did not grow up in a city.

4)  

© Copyright Read Theory LLC, 2012. All rights reserved.
To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using keywords from the prompt. The keyword in this sentence is “auspicious,” an adjective that, like the missing word, describes the predictions or portents as lucky or promising. Thus, the missing word must likewise mean auspicious. Therefore, choice (E) is correct: propitious means full of promise.

(A) is incorrect because ominous means portending evil or harm, the very opposite of predictions that are described as “auspicious.”

(B) is incorrect because momentous means of great importance. The predictions might have been extremely important, but the prompt does not give enough information to support this idea. The prompt only makes it clear that the “auspicious” predictions ultimately “failed.”

(C) is incorrect because lamentable means regrettable. However, the missing word describes the predictions, not the tragic outcome of Macbeth’s actions. Macbeth’s reality could be described as lamentable, but the predictions themselves were the opposite.

(D) is incorrect because sinister means evil. This is the opposite of predictions that are described as “auspicious.”

5) D

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using keywords from the prompt. Here, the keywords are “both organisms benefit.” The related independent clause before the semicolon explains how the clownfish and the sea anemone help each other survive, so the missing word must refer to the mutually beneficial relationship between these two creatures. Because symbiotic means interdependent, choice (D) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because docile means easily managed or trained. This word could imply that the clownfish and sea anemone can easily inhabit the same space, but it does not give a strong enough meaning to accurately describe the fact that both organisms depend on each other.

(B) is incorrect because disjointed means disconnected or incoherent. This word describes the very opposite of the interdependent, mutually beneficial relationship that the prompt describes.

(C) is incorrect because amenable means ready or able to agree. While the prompt makes it clear the anemone and the clownfish get along, this word is not strong enough in meaning to work for the missing word. The prompt suggests that the organisms do not merely get along; they need each other to survive.

(E) is incorrect because contrary means determined to be contrasting. This word describes the very opposite of the relationship the prompt describes, as that relationship is mutually beneficial.

6) D

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using keywords from the prompt. Here, the keyword is “actually,” which describes a claim the boy made that was contrary to his usual stories. The missing word must mean untrue or false, since then it would be a surprise to find him telling a story about “actually” seeing a wolf. Since fictitious means made up or unreal, choice (D) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because fallacious means deceptive or misleading. While this could work in context for the missing word, the prompt only implies that the boy’s stories were imagined, not that they were intentionally deceptive. There is, thus, not enough information given in the prompt to support this choice.

(B) is incorrect because verifiable means able to be confirmed. As such, this does not work in context. This word would imply that the boy’s usual tales were rooted in reality.

(C) is incorrect because scrupulous means principled. This word would not describe either the boy or his tales, as his tales are apparently not rooted in reality.

(E) is incorrect because concrete means real, the exact opposite of the boy’s usual tales. If the boy’s tales were typically authentic, the villagers would be more likely to believe them.