Sentence Completion 1  Level 9

**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. Athens is remembered by historians as a peaceful society known for its philosophers and scientists, while its neighbor, Sparta, is remembered for its ______ people and focus.
   A. chivalrous  
   B. contentious  
   C. controversial  
   D. inflammatory  
   E. martial

2. The storm ______ our efforts to hold a company picnic in the park last weekend, because it was impossible to stay outdoors in such a ______.
   A. destroyed … squalor  
   B. bolstered … torrent  
   C. thwarted … downpour  
   D. increased … monsoon  
   E. ruined … tragedy

3. The two rich cousins were very similar to each other in their ______ lifestyles: both spent money freely and ostentatiously displayed the ______ of their homes to their less wealthy neighbors.
   A. lavish … opulence  
   B. frugal … misery  
   C. stingy … sumptuousness  
   D. austere … grandeur  
   E. luxurious … deficiency

4. Tim was such a worthless and lazy contributor to the group that his inclusion in it served as ______, rather than an advantage, to the group’s progress.
   A. a hindrance  
   B. a positive  
   C. an onus  
   D. a cancer  
   E. a boon

5. Many critics worry that technological devices are becoming ______ too soon these days; they contend that humans are becoming too obsessed with progress and that the proliferation of outdated and outmoded technology underscores this obsession.
   A. empowered  
   B. electronic  
   C. obsolete  
   D. updated  
   E. reconfigured

6. Far from being harmful as was thought to be the case, running on bare feet is ______ at worst and beneficial at best.
   A. innocuous  
   B. detrimental  
   C. profitable  
   D. ambivalent  
   E. injurious
Answers and Explanations

1) E
To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its meaning by using keywords from the prompt. Here, the keyword is “while,” which sets up an opposite relationship between Athens and Sparta. Thus, if Athens is “peaceful,” Sparta must be the opposite of peaceful. Martial means warlike or inclined to war, making it the opposite of peaceful, so choice (E) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because chivalrous means having the qualities of chivalry, namely bravery, courtesy, and loyalty. This does not set up the necessary opposite relationship with “peaceful,” since chivalrous is not the same as warlike or hostile.

(B) is incorrect because contentious means controversial. This does not set up the necessary opposite relationship with “peaceful,” since contentious is not the same as warlike or hostile.

(C) is incorrect because controversial means giving rise to public disagreement. This does not set up the necessary opposite relationship with “peaceful,” since controversial is not the same as warlike or hostile.

(D) is incorrect because inflammatory means intended to arouse anger or violent feelings. This does not set up the necessary opposite relationship with “peaceful,” since inflammatory is not the same as warlike or hostile.

2) C
To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using keywords from the prompt. Here, each missing word has its own set of keywords. The first missing word’s keyword is “because,” which indicates a cause-and-effect relationship between the two clauses of the sentence and explains what the storm did to the picnic efforts. Since “it was impossible to stay outdoors,” the storm must have made it impossible to hold the picnic in the park. The second missing word’s keyword is the “storm,” since the second missing word refers to what it was impossible to stay outdoors in. The correct choice will provide one word that implies that the storm hurt efforts and one word that means storm. Because thwarted means prevented someone from accomplishing something, and a downpour is a heavy rainfall, choice (C) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because only the first word could work in context. Destroyed means ruined something, while squalor is a state of being extremely dirty and unpleasant. Though the storm could have destroyed “efforts to hold a company picnic” outside, squalor is not related to a storm.

(B) is incorrect because only the second word could work in context. Bolstered means strengthened or supported, while a torrent is a sudden, violent, and copious outpouring of something, including rain. A storm could be referred to as “such a torrent,” but a storm would not improve the efforts to hold a picnic outside.

(D) is incorrect because only the second word could work in context. Increased means made greater or larger, while a monsoon is a persistent wind that may be accompanied with rain in Southeast Asia. The “storm” in the prompt could be a monsoon if the prompt took place in Southeast Asia, but “efforts to hold a company picnic” outside would not be increased by a storm.

(E) is incorrect because only the first word could work in context. Ruined means reduced to a state of decay or collapse, while a tragedy is an event causing great suffering. Though the storm could have destroyed “efforts to hold a company picnic” outside, a storm is not necessarily a tragedy.

3) A
To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their meanings by using keywords from the prompt. Here, the keywords are in the clause “both spent money freely and ostentatiously.” Since the cousins are “similar to each other” and spent money freely, the two missing words must both relate to being “rich” and loose with money. Thus, the correct choice will provide a pair of words with similar meanings, both of which relate to being rich. Lavish means very extravagant or rich, while opulence is great wealth or luxuriousness, so choice (A) is correct.

(B) is incorrect because it does not provide a pair of words with similar meanings. Frugal means sparing or economical with regard to money, while misery is a state of great distress or discomfort. These words have no clear relationship. Additionally, people who “spent money freely” would not be said to live frugal lifestyles.

(C) is incorrect because it does not provide a pair of words with similar meanings. Stingy means cheap or miserly, while sumptuousness is the state of being splendid and expensive-looking. These words are opposites, not synonyms.

(D) is incorrect because it does not provide a pair of words with similar meanings. Austerely means severe or strict in manner, while grandeur is splendor and impressiveness. These words are opposites, not synonyms.

(E) is incorrect because it does not provide a pair of words with similar meanings. Luxurious means extremely comfortable in an expensive way, while deficiency is a failing or shortcoming. These words are opposites, not synonyms.

4) A
To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its meaning by using keywords from the prompt. Here the keywords are “rather than,” which sets up an opposite relationship between what Tim was and “an advantage.” The opposite of an advantage is a deficit or something that hurts something else, so the missing word must refer to something negative that would describe a
person who is “a worthless and lazy contributor.” A lazy contributor would not help his group. Since a hindrance is an obstacle or thing that provides delay or obstruction to the progress of something, choice (A) is correct.

(B) is incorrect because a positive is something good. This is the opposite of a correct choice, since a correct choice would be a word that is the opposite of “an advantage.”

(C) is incorrect because an onus is a difficult obligation or burden. This does not work in context because nothing in the prompt implies that Tim was himself an obligation, as nothing implies that Tim was required to be in the group.

(D) is incorrect because a cancer is an evil condition or thing that spreads destructively. Nothing in the prompt implies that Tim’s worthlessness and laziness were spreading to other members of the group, so this choice does not work in context.

(E) is incorrect because a boon is a blessing or something that is helpful. This is the opposite of a correct choice, since a correct choice would be a word that is the opposite of “an advantage.”

5) C
To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its meaning by using clues from the prompt. Here, the main clue is the semicolon, which is used to link independent clauses that are logically related. This means there is a relationship between what “technological devices are becoming” and “the proliferation of outdated and outmoded technology.” The missing word refers to what the devices are becoming, so it must likewise mean outdated or outmoded. Because obsolete means out of date or no longer in use, so choice (C) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because empowered means given authority or power. Technological devices cannot be given authority or power, since technological devices cannot rule a society. Therefore, this choice is illogical.

(B) is incorrect because electronic means powered by electricity. Any technological device can be electronic regardless of whether or not it is “outdated” or “outmoded,” since being outdated has no connection to being electronic or non-electronic.

(D) is incorrect because updated means made more modern or up to date. This is the opposite of a correct choice, since the prompt implies that the “technological devices” in question are becoming “outdated and outmoded,” not updated.

(E) is incorrect because reconfigured means remodeled, remade, or restructured. This is the opposite of a correct choice, since the prompt implies that the “technological devices” in question are becoming “outdated and outmoded,” not remodeled.

6) A
To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its meaning by using keywords from the prompt. Here, the keywords are the phrase “far from being,” a phrase that implies a negative or opposite relationship. This means that “running on bare feet” is the opposite of “harmful,” so the missing word must likewise mean the opposite of harmful. Because innocuous means harmless or inoffensive, choice (A) is correct.

(B) is incorrect because detrimental means harmful. This does not set up the necessary opposite relationship with “harmful.”

(C) is incorrect because profitable means beneficial or useful. This does not work because the prompt implies that “running on bare feet” can be “beneficial at best” and something else “at worst.” It would be illogical to say that it is profitable at worst and beneficial at best, since profitable is synonymous with beneficial.

(D) is incorrect because ambivalent means having mixed feelings about someone or something. This cannot work in context because ambivalent can only logically describe a person and not an action such as “running on bare feet.”

(E) is incorrect because injurious means harmful. This does not set up the necessary opposite relationship with “harmful.”