



● Sentence Completion 10 *(high-advanced GRE level)*

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

1. Douglas was stubborn in his ways and resistant to change; on the other hand, his brother Quentin was adventurous and willingly embraced the _____ of life.
 - A. vicissitudes
 - B. jeopardy
 - C. eccentricities
 - D. praxes
 - E. consuetude
2. In writing the so-called "Canuck letter," Ed Muskie _____ employed a derogatory term for French Canadians; as a result, he came across as _____ bigot.
 - A. callously...an uncouth
 - B. audaciously...an abashed
 - C. impudently...a bantam
 - D. surreptitiously...a conspicuous
 - E. shamelessly...a brazen
3. Hoping to prevent Remy from learning of the surprise party in advance, Rachel _____ made all of the necessary arrangements.
 - A. fraudulently
 - B. surreptitiously
 - C. conspiratorially
 - D. circumspectly
 - E. obstreperously
4. The multiple accusations of sexual harassment _____ the candidate's reputation; what is more, his laughably low-quality campaign ads _____ his name even further.
 - A. aspersed...bolstered
 - B. desecrated...cleared
 - C. adulterated...purified
 - D. ameliorated...tainted
 - E. denigrated...besmirched
5. Fitzgerald's first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, is somewhat _____ when compared to *The Great Gatsby*; nevertheless, it is still a more sophisticated novel than most writers' debut works.
 - A. cavalier
 - B. homespun
 - C. unfledged
 - D. gauche
 - E. nuanced
6. The labor settlement was far too _____ for a layman to understand, so the mediator explained the agreement in simpler, more comprehensible language.
 - A. circumlocutory
 - B. Byzantine
 - C. rococo
 - D. daedal
 - E. intelligible

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 words are “stubborn” and “resistant to change,” which describe Douglas. The final clause of this sentence describes Douglas’s brother, Quentin. The two clauses are linked by the phrase “on the other hand,” which implies contrast. Thus, the second clause suggests that Quentin was the opposite of “stubborn” and “resistant to change.” The missing word must mean change, since Quentin “willingly embraced” change instead of being resistant to it like his brother. The correct answer is choice **(A)**, since *vicissitudes* are changes or variations.

(B) is incorrect because *jeopardy* is danger or peril. Nothing in the prompt supports the idea that Quentin enjoyed danger or peril. The idea that he was “adventurous” might support the claim that he would “embrace” danger, but this is a stretch, since adventure and danger are not synonymous.

(C) is incorrect because *eccentricities* are deviations from normal or standard behaviors. The fact that Quentin was “adventurous” might support the idea that he sometimes behaved eccentrically, but there is not enough evidence in the prompt to support this. Furthermore, this answer choice fails to establish a relationship opposite to the fact that Douglas was “resistant to change.” Deviations and changes are not exactly synonymous in this context.

(D) is incorrect because *praxes* are conventions or customs. Set conventions or customs would not necessarily be embraced by someone who was “adventurous” and “willingly embraced” change.

(E) is incorrect because *consuetude* is a custom or standard practice. Set conventions or customs would not necessarily be embraced by someone who was “adventurous” and “willingly embraced” change.

2) E

To figure out what the missing word is, we need to form a logical relationship between the two missing words. The first clause is connected to the second clause via the conjunction “as a result.” This means that the meaning of the second missing word should follow directly from the meaning of the first missing word. Since *brazen* means to do something *shamelessly*, choice **(E)** is correct.

(A) is incorrect because *callously* means heartlessly or cruelly. This does not form the proper relationship with *uncouth*, which means awkwardly rude or clumsy.

(B) is incorrect because *audaciously* means boldly. This does not form the proper relationship with *abashed*, which means shamed or embarrassed.

(C) is incorrect because *impudently* daringly or boldly. This does not form the proper relationship with *bantam*, which means small or diminutive.

(D) is incorrect because *surreptitiously* means sneakily or stealthily. This does not form the proper relationship with *conspicuously*, which means easily seen or noticed.

3) B

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 first clause: “hoping to prevent Remy from learning of the surprise party.” This phrase is used to explain Rachel’s motivations for the action described in the second clause. The missing word describes how she made “the necessary arrangements” with that goal in mind. Thus, because she wanted to maintain secrecy, she probably would have made the arrangements secretly. The missing word must therefore mean done in secret. This means choice (B) is correct, since *surreptitiously* means stealthily or clandestinely.

(A) is incorrect because *fraudulently* means dishonestly. Though the prompt is clear that Rachel did not want to ruin Remy’s “surprise,” the prompt does not say that she had to lie or act dishonestly to ensure that the party remained a secret.

(C) is incorrect because *conspiratorially* means done secretly by a group of people for an evil or unlawful purpose. While this word correctly implies that Rachel would have acted secretly, it does not work in context. There is nothing evil or unlawful about throwing a “surprise party,” and there is no conspiracy involved in doing so.

(D) is incorrect because *circumspectly* means cautiously or warily. Rachel probably did act cautiously to prevent Remy from learning of the “surprise party,” but acting cautiously is not the same as acting secretly.

(E) is incorrect because *obstreperously* means noisily or boisterously. This would not describe how someone would make secret plans if he or she did not want the secret to be revealed.

4) E

To figure out what the missing word is, we need to form a logical relationship between the two missing words. The first clause is connected to the second clause via the conjunction “what is more.” This means that the meaning of the second missing word should follow directly from, or embellish upon, the meaning of the first missing word. We know that both missing words describe the candidate’s reputation. Since, *denigrated* and *besmirched* are synonymous, we know that choice (E) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because *aspersed* means slandered or attacked with false accusations. This does not form the proper relationship with *bolstered*, which means reinforced or strengthened.

(B) is incorrect because *desecrated* means abused something sacred. This does not form the proper relationship with *cleared*, which means cleaned or restored.

(C) is incorrect because *adulterated* means made impure by adding inferior materials. This does not form the proper relationship with *purified*, which means cleansed or cleaned.

(D) is incorrect because *ameliorated* means improved materials. This does not form the proper relationship with *tainted*, which means contaminated.

5) C

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 “sophisticated.” The prompt makes clear in the second clause that the book was more sophisticated than other writers’ first works. However, this clause is separated from the first clause by the word “nevertheless.” This word sets up a negative or opposite relationship. Thus, the missing word must mean the opposite of “sophisticated.” Choice (C) is correct: *unfledged* means immature or lacking sophistication.

(A) is incorrect because *cavalier* means carefree. Nothing in the prompt describes *This Side of Paradise* as a lighthearted or carefree novel. The only information that is given about the novel is that it is “sophisticated” when compared to other “debut works” but not *The Great Gatsby*.

(B) is incorrect because *homespun* means plain or unadorned. The prompt does imply that *This Side of Paradise* is not “sophisticated” when compared to *The Great Gatsby*, but it does not imply that it is plain or lacking in style.

(D) is incorrect because *gauche* means crude or awkward. However, this word exclusively refers to being crude or awkward in social situations. It could not be used to describe a book, so it therefore does not work in context.

(E) is incorrect because *nuanced* means having subtle shades of or differences in meaning. This word is usually used to describe a high-quality novel, not one that is not “sophisticated.” *This Side of Paradise* may have been more nuanced than other “debut works,” but it was not more nuanced than *The Great Gatsby*. The position of the missing word in the prompt means that this answer choice does not work in context.

6) B

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. The prompt’s key words are “simpler, more

comprehensible language,” which describes how the mediator had to explain the agreement. The missing word describes the agreement before it was explained this way, so the agreement must have been complex. This means that choice **(B)** is correct, since *Byzantine* means highly complex.

(A) is incorrect because *circumlocutory* means spoken in a roundabout or indirect way. This could describe the overly complex settlement in its original form, but there is not enough evidence to support this answer choice. It is possible, for instance, that the settlement simply used advanced or less “comprehensible” language without being indirect.

(C) is incorrect because *rococo* means highly ornate. It could be used to refer to a work of art that is “complex” but not a “labor settlement.” The settlement was difficult to comprehend in a simple way, but not necessarily embellished with stylistic flair.

(D) is incorrect because *daedal* means cleverly intricate. This could theoretically describe the complex settlement. However, it could only work if the agreement were also considered clever or smart. This prompt gives no indication that the “labor settlement” was clever, so *daedal* is not the right word to use in this prompt.

(E) is incorrect because *intelligible* means comprehensible. This would not be used to describe a “settlement” that was “far too [complex] for a layman to understand.” This word has the opposite meaning of what is required by the prompt.