



● Sentence Completion 12 *(low-advanced SAT level)*

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

1. The overly _____ title character was the embodiment of _____: he was so greedy that he literally sold his daughter to the highest bidder.
A. conventional ... orthodoxy
B. covetous ... avarice
C. mellifluous ... evil
D. gregarious ... rapacity
E. penurious ... philanthropy
2. After wandering the desert for nearly three days without sight of water, the commander was overwhelmed with joy to _____ an oasis in the distance.
A. desiccate
B. despoil
C. devise
D. descry
E. deviate
3. The couple was upset by the construction of the new skyscraper across the street, as the building would _____ their once scenic view.
A. ameliorate
B. occlude
C. obviate
D. disencumber
E. plagiarize
4. Many cult leaders will go to great lengths to impress others: for example, Jim Jones, one of history's most infamous religious _____, staged miracles to convince his retinue to continue following him.
A. raconteurs
B. epicures
C. pundits
D. polyglots
E. hucksters
5. The veterinarian told us that the kitten's original owners were _____ and did not give her adequate food, water, or shelter.
A. scurrilous
B. remiss
C. prudent
D. sheer
E. doting
6. One of the most important steps of the recipe is to _____ out impurities from the soup; failure to _____ the broth for pieces of fat and burnt bits will make for a bitter soup.
A. winnow ... skim
B. withstand ... resist
C. sieve ... peruse
D. scuttle ... obliterate
E. separate ... nettle

Answers and Explanations

1) B

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. Here, the key word for both words is “greedy,” which comes in the clause that follows the colon. Colons are used to separate explanatory information from the rest of the sentence, meaning the second clause here elaborates on or explains the first one. Thus, the character in question must be overly greedy and the embodiment of greed, as the second clause explains why he is the embodiment of greed. *Covetous* means greedy, and *avarice* means greed, so choice **(B)** is the best answer.

(A) is incorrect. Though *conventional* and *orthodoxy* are synonymous, neither word relates to greed, as *conventional* means customary and *orthodoxy* means adhering to given customs.

(C) is incorrect because there is no relationship between the two words, and neither necessarily fits into the context of the prompt. *Mellifluous* means sweetly flowing and has no relationship to the prompt, and *evil* means completely bad. While the character in the prompt is not a good person, the prompt only states that he was greedy, not evil.

(D) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. *Rapacity* means greed and definitely fits the prompt, but *gregarious* means sociable and is therefore not something that would describe the greedy title character of the prompt.

(E) is incorrect because neither word works in context. *Penurious* means poor, though the prompt only implies that the title character was greedy, not necessarily poor. *Philanthropy* means generosity, the complete opposite of what the title character embodies.

2) D

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. The keywords here are “without sight of water” and “an oasis,” which is a place in the desert that has water. The prompt hinges on a cause-and-effect relationship: because the commander had not seen water in days, the oasis made the commander happy. The missing word is a verb that describes what the commander did to the oasis, and it must mean something such as find or see, since the commander had not seen water for days. Therefore, choice **(D)** is the correct answer, because *descry* means to see or discover.

(A) is incorrect because *desiccate* means to dry up. Since the commander wanted water, it would not make sense for the commander to be happy to dry up the oasis, the only source of water seen in days.

(B) is incorrect because *despoil* means strip of valuables and is thus not a word that in anyway could relate to seeing an oasis in the distance.

(C) is incorrect because *devise* means dream up or invent. The commander would not be overwhelmed with joy due to merely dreaming up an oasis.

(E) is incorrect because *deviate* means turn away from. Since the commander wanted water, it would not make sense for the commander to turn away from an oasis.

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 here are “their once scenic view,” and the prompt hinges on a cause-and-effect relationship: the second clause explains why the couple was upset. They are upset because their view will no longer be scenic as it once was. Thus, the correct answer for the missing word would be a word that means the skyscraper negatively affected their view. Choice **(B)** provides such a word, as *occlude* means block.

(A) is incorrect because *ameliorate* means improve. If the skyscraper improved the couple’s view, they would not be upset by the construction of the building.

(C) is incorrect because *obviate* means make unnecessary. A view cannot ever be described as either necessary or unnecessary, so *obviate* does not make sense in context.

(D) is incorrect because *disencumber* means free from burdens or entanglements. The view was, apparently, enjoyed by the couple and was not a burden, so it would not make sense to say the skyscraper freed them of the burden of “their once scenic view.”

(E) is incorrect because *plagiarize* means to copy someone else’s work and claim it as one’s own. It in no way relates to the couple from the prompt’s “once scenic view.”

4) **E**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. In this prompt, Jim Jones is used as an example of a “cult leader,” and the key word to describe his actions is “staged,” implying that his miracles were fake acts, not real miracles. Thus, the missing word must be one that implies that Jones was not honest and was a fraud. *Huckster* means a person who employs showy methods to make a sale or to convince others of greatness, and so choice **(E)** is the best answer choice.

(A) is incorrect because a *raconteur* is merely a storyteller, not necessarily someone who would stage miracles to convince people of his powers.

(B) is incorrect because an *epicure* is someone who enjoys fine foods, not someone who would stage miracles to convince people of his powers.

(C) is incorrect because a *pundit* is an authority on a particular subject, not someone who would stage miracles to convince people of his powers.

(D) is incorrect because a *polyglot* is someone who speaks or writes in many languages, not someone who would stage miracles to convince people of his powers.

5) **B**

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 found in the clause “did not give her adequate food, water, or shelter.” These words describe “the kitten’s original owners” in the same way that the missing word does, so the missing word must be one that means negligent. Choice (B) provides such a word: *remiss* means negligent.

(A) is incorrect because *scurrilous* means vulgar. The prompt implies that the original owners did not provide adequate care, but it does not call them vulgar.

(C) is incorrect because *prudent* means cautious or careful. As the original owners of the kitten did not provide adequate care, they were probably not prudent or cautious.

(D) is incorrect because *sheer* means very thin or transparent. People cannot be described as sheer, so this word does not work in context.

(E) is incorrect because *doting* means excessively fond. As the original owners of the kitten did not provide adequate care, they were probably not overly fond of the kitten.

6) **A**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. Here, the only keywords are “impurities” and “pieces of fat and burnt bits.” These suggest things that do not belong in the soup, things that would make the soup “bitter.” The sentence’s structure implies equivalency between the missing words, as both are verbs relating to things that should be removed from the soup. Both missing words, thus, mean something akin to remove. Choice (A) is, therefore, the best answer, as *winnow* means separate and *skim* means clear or remove from the surface of a liquid.

(B) is incorrect because neither word works in context. Both *withstand* and *resist* mean hold out against. These words would imply that the impurities would stay in the soup then, rather than being separated from it.

(C) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Sieve* means sift or separate, but *peruse* means to read carefully. A broth cannot be read, so *peruse* makes no logical sense in context.

(D) is incorrect because neither word works in context. *Scuttle* means sink, and *obliterate* means destroy completely. The sentence does not imply that impurities should sink into the broth or that the broth should be eliminated.

(E) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Separate* means to divide and could work to describe the removal of the impurities from the soup. The second word does not work, though, as *nettle* means to annoy, but a broth cannot be annoyed.