



● Sentence Completion 3 (low-advanced SAT level)

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

1. The storm _____ our efforts to hold a company picnic last weekend. It was impossible to stay outdoors in such a _____.
 - A. destroyed ... squalor
 - B. bolstered ... torrent
 - C. thwarted ... downpour
 - D. increased ... monsoon
 - E. ruined ... tragedy
2. _____ of William Shakespeare believe his sonnets to be the ideal that all other poets should strive to emulate.
 - A. Aficionados
 - B. Critics
 - C. Turncoats
 - D. Deniers
 - E. Detractors
3. In the _____ novel *The Screwtape Letters*, author C. S. Lewis uses the correspondences of a pair of demons to tell the tale of a man's struggle with his faith.
 - A. adversarial
 - B. contentious
 - C. controversial
 - D. inflammatory
 - E. epistolary
4. Some critics find it alarming that technological devices should become _____ as quickly as they do these days. Others contend that the replacement of old technology with new innovations is merely a mark of healthy scientific progress.
 - A. empowered
 - B. electronic
 - C. obsolete
 - D. updated
 - E. reconfigured
5. The emperor Mansa Musa is known bringing _____ caravan of tens of thousands of servants and many tons of gold along with him on a religious pilgrimage.
 - A. a lavish
 - B. a sparse
 - C. an insufficient
 - D. an austere
 - E. a deficient
6. The Nazi Party _____ the idea that the Jews were causing all of Germany's problems. The Nazis carried out a terrible _____ in an attempt to wipe out the Jewish population.
 - A. espoused ... genocide
 - B. challenged ... war
 - C. asserted ... campaign
 - D. abhorred ... Holocaust
 - E. promoted ... disease
7. The _____ cost of golf makes it a sport of the upper classes; many people cannot pay the price of the equipment, attire, and club membership fees.
 - A. reasonable
 - B. inexpensive
 - C. modest
 - D. prohibitive
 - E. affordable
8. Agnostics consider questions of divinity to be _____, claiming that it is impossible to know whether or not God exists.
 - A. straightforward
 - B. imponderable
 - C. forthright
 - D. conspicuous
 - E. self-evident

Answers and Explanations

1) C

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. A picnic is a type of outdoor party or meal. If a storm occurs in the area where you are trying to have a picnic, you will most likely need to cancel your picnic. It is not pleasant to eat outdoors during a storm. It can be said that the storm **(C)** *thwarted*, or frustrated, your plans to hold a picnic. If the storm was a *downpour*, then it was accompanied by heavy rain that would make it impossible to eat outside.

(A) is incorrect because *squalor* refers to filth or poverty, not any type of weather. Therefore, the second half of this answer choice has no relationship with the clue in the question.

(B) is incorrect because *bolstered* means supported or reinforced. The storm would not bolster your efforts; it would do the exact opposite and ruin them.

(D) is incorrect for reasons similar to why *bolstered* is incorrect. The storm would not *increase* your efforts; it would ruin them.

(E) is incorrect because a *tragedy* is an event that is a disastrous, usually depressing event. Cancelling your picnic because of a storm may be slightly upsetting, but *tragedy* has a much stronger meaning.

2) A

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. If someone thinks that Shakespeare's sonnets are models that all other poets should try to copy, then that person must have a very high opinion of Shakespeare and his sonnets. The correct answer must have a positive connotation to reflect positive feelings about Shakespeare. People who have very positive feelings about a topic are **(A)** *aficionados*. This is the only answer choice that has a positive connotation.

(B) is incorrect because *critic* often has a negative connotation. People who are critical of Shakespeare might not think that his works are ideal.

(C) is incorrect because *turncoats* are traitors, or disloyal people who betray the trust of others. This has a strongly negative connotation and does not describe people who hold Shakespeare in high regard.

(D) is incorrect because *deniers* are people who deny the truth about some topic. If someone thinks Shakespeare's sonnets are ideal, he or she is not denying anything about Shakespeare.

(E) is incorrect because *detractors* are people who speak ill of others. This cannot be used to describe the people in the question, who speak positively of Shakespeare.

3) E

The main clue in this question is “correspondences.” This means that *The Screwtape Letters* is comprised of a series of letters that frame the plot of the story. Books that use this technique are called (E) *epistolary* novels. This term comes from the word *epistle*, which means *letter*.

(A) is incorrect because *adversarial* relates to enemies and conflict. There is nothing in the question that hints at any conflict between enemies.

(B) is incorrect because *contentious* refers to controversy or disagreement. There is nothing in the question that hints at any controversy in or about the novel.

(C) is incorrect because *controversial* is very close in meaning to *contentious*. As stated above, nothing in the question hints at controversy in or about the novel.

(D) is incorrect because *inflammatory* refers to insults or other language that excites people to anger. There is nothing in the question that hints that the novel tries to insult anyone or make anyone angry.

4) C

The main clue in this question is “the replacement of old technology with new innovations.” This refers to the trend of older technology becoming (C) *obsolete*. When something is obsolete, it is no longer current. It falls out of use, and newer devices take its place.

(A) is incorrect because something that has been *empowered* has been given power or influence. On the contrary, old technology loses influence over time.

(B) is incorrect because any *electronic* device can be either old or new, obsolete or current. Devices do not become electronic simply by aging. This word does not fit within the question.

(D) is incorrect because a device can be *updated* without becoming obsolete. It is possible to upgrade or otherwise fix an old device without having to throw it away and replace it.

(E) is incorrect because *reconfigured* is very close in meaning to *updated*. Older devices can be reconfigured without being replaced entirely.

5) A

The key words in this question are “tens of thousands of servants and many tons of gold.” Even by modern standards, this would be an extremely (A) *lavish*

caravan. When something is lavish, it indicates a high level of wealth or luxury. This describes Mansa Musa's caravan quite well.

(B) is incorrect because *sparse* means thinly populated or small in number, which is the opposite of how the emperor's caravan is described.

(C) is incorrect because *insufficient* means not enough. It is difficult to say that Mansa Musa did not have enough gold or servants in his caravan, because he had lots of each.

(D) is incorrect because *austere* means simple and stern. This word cannot be used to describe Mansa Musa's caravan, because the caravan showed off the emperor's wealth and large number of servants.

(E) is incorrect because *deficient* is similar in meaning to *insufficient*. Mansa Musa's caravan was not lacking in anything; he had thousands of servants and tons of gold.

6) **A**

The main clue in this sentence is "an attempt to wipe out the Jewish population." This means that the members of the Nazi party tried to kill every Jewish person they could. They did this because they **(A)** *espoused* or supported the idea that the Jews were damaging Germany. This led to a terrible *genocide*. A genocide is an attempt to wipe out all of the members of a certain population. The genocide that the Nazis carried out against the Jews is one of the most famous attempted genocides of all time.

(B) is incorrect because the Nazis did not *challenge* any anti-Semitic (anti-Jewish) ideas. They accepted and promoted anti-Semitic ideas. If they had challenged these ideas, then they would not have waged *war* in an attempt to wipe out the Jewish population.

(C) is incorrect because although the Nazis *asserted* anti-Semitic ideas, they did not merely wage a *campaign* against the Jews. The word *campaign* does not have a strong enough meaning to convey just how terrible the Nazis' actions against the Jews truly were. This is not the best answer choice.

(D) is incorrect because the Nazis did carry out the *Holocaust* against the Jewish people, but they did not *abhor* (detest, hate) anti-Semitic ideas. Rather, they promoted these ideas. If they had abhorred these ideas, they never would have carried out the Holocaust.

(E) is incorrect because although the Nazis did *promote* anti-Semitic ideas, they did not use a *disease* to try to wipe out the Jews. A disease is the result of natural causes, but the Nazis' attempt to kill all the Jews was a result of very methodical, manmade plans.

7) **D**

The main clues in this sentence are “upper classes” and “cannot pay the price.” This means that most people who are not very rich cannot afford to play golf. Whenever something is so expensive that most people cannot afford it, it can be said that the cost is **(D) prohibitive**. The cost prohibits (prevents) people from participating.

(A) is incorrect because the cost of golf is not *reasonable* for most people. If the cost of something is reasonable, then most people can afford it. However, this does not describe the costs associated with playing golf.

(B) is incorrect because the cost of golf is not *inexpensive*. If golf were inexpensive, then most people would be able to afford the costs associated with playing it, but we know from the question that the opposite is true.

(C) is incorrect because the cost of golf is not *modest*. Whenever something costs a modest amount of money, it costs very little and is easily affordable. However, we know from the question that this does not describe the costs of playing golf.

(E) is incorrect because golf is not *affordable*. If it were, then most people would be able to afford to play it and it would no longer be a sport for only upper-class people.

8) **B**

The main clue in this question is “impossible to know.” Whenever a topic has no clear answers or is so complex that it is difficult to imagine, then that topic is said to be **(B) imponderable**. Agnostics claim that the question of the existence of God is imponderable because there are no clear answers to that question.

(A) is incorrect because the question is not *straightforward*, or easily understood. If it were, then agnostics would not think that it is impossible to know the answer to the question.

(C) is incorrect because *forthright* means upfront or honest. Not only can questions themselves not be forthright (only people can have this quality, not inanimate objects), but the question also implies that there is nothing upfront about questions of divinity, which are portrayed as unanswerable.

(D) is incorrect because questions of divinity are not *conspicuous* or obvious. If they were, then agnostics would not claim that the answers to these questions are impossible to know.

(E) is incorrect because *self-evident* is similar in meaning to *conspicuous*. Something that is self-evident is obvious because of its clearly-recognizable characteristics. However, this does not describe any topic that can also be described as “impossible to know.”