



● Sentence Completion 3 (high-advanced GRE level)

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

1. My haughty mother-in-law often makes _____ comments; on the other hand, my father-in-law is humble and kind.
 - A. deferential
 - B. ferocious
 - C. supercilious
 - D. insolent
 - E. affluent
2. Just as the start of football season _____ the end of summer for sports fans, baseball season's opening day signals the start of spring.
 - A. adumbrates
 - B. promulgates
 - C. divines
 - D. heralds
 - E. shrouds
3. Though the palace at Versailles was once decried as the embodiment of the grandeur and opulence that had crippled the French economy, the _____ palace continues to draw admiration from modern-day visitors.
 - A. apotheosized
 - B. antediluvian
 - C. aristocratic
 - D. austere
 - E. august
4. After months of debating and campaigning, few expected the delegates to get along amicably at the convention; however, no one anticipated that they would be as _____ as they were.
 - A. fractious
 - B. civil
 - C. raucous
 - D. noisome
 - E. impudent
5. Pop art dispelled the notion that there was a separation between art and mass culture; as a result, many of the best works of the movement feature subjects once considered too _____ for high art.
 - A. inglorious
 - B. derivative
 - C. plebeian
 - D. haute
 - E. uncouth
6. The poem was too _____; it would have been better if the poet had not stated its meaning so explicitly.
 - A. opaque
 - B. perspicuous
 - C. apparent
 - D. ambiguous
 - E. inconspicuous

Answers and Explanations

1) C

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. Here, the key word is “haughty.” This word, like the missing word, describes the “mother-in-law” and her comments. Furthermore, the phrase “on the other hand” implies that the mother-in-law is the opposite of the father-in-law, who is “humble and kind.” The missing word must mean haughty, snobbish, or unkind. Choice **(C)** is the best answer, since *supercilious* means haughtily contemptuous.

(A) is incorrect because *deferential* means showing respect or esteem. Someone who is “haughty” or the opposite of “humble” probably does not show respect or esteem to others very often.

(B) is incorrect because *ferocious* means extremely fierce, usually with a connotation of violence. While the prompt makes it clear the “mother-in-law” is the opposite of “kind,” it does not indicate that she is necessarily violent.

(D) is incorrect because *insolent* means rude or disrespectful. While the prompt makes it clear the “mother-in-law” is probably not nice or respectful, insolence and haughtiness are not the same thing. A person can be haughty without being rude.

(E) is incorrect because *affluent* means wealthy. While some wealthy people may be snobbish or “haughty,” merely being wealthy does not make one a snob. There is not enough information in the prompt to support this answer choice.

2) D

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 word is “signals.” The prompt also hinges on the phrase “just as,” which suggests that the two clauses in the question are equal. “Signals” serves the same role in the second clause that the missing word does in the first. Therefore, the missing word must also mean signals. Choice **(D)** provides the right word, then, as *heralds* means indicates or signals the arrival of something.

(A) is incorrect because *adumbrates* means foreshadows. This is not as strong of an answer choice as (D). *Heralds* clearly states that football season signals the end of summer. *Adumbrates* would indicate that football season merely implies the end of summer.

(B) is incorrect because *promulgates* means proclaims formally or through a public declaration. Though “the start of football season” does signal “the end of summer,” it does not formally declare or proclaim it.

(C) is incorrect because *divines* means prophecies. This word does not work in context, as it would imply that “football season” were able to predict the future rather than merely symbolize a change in seasons.

(E) is incorrect because *shrouds* means covers up. As such, this word would imply that “football season” actually prevented people from seeing the end of summer. This does not make sense from a logical standpoint.

3) E

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. There are two words or phrases that relate to the palace in the same way as the missing word: “grandeur” and “opulence.” Thus, the missing word must likewise mean grand or opulent. Therefore, choice (E) is the best answer choice: *august* means dignified, majestic, or awe-inspiring.

(A) is incorrect because *apotheosized* means glorified or deified. While the palace is described as “awe-inspiring,” it is not necessarily elevated to divine stature. Furthermore, apotheosized usually refers to people, not places.

(B) is incorrect because *antediluvian* means extremely ancient. Though the palace several hundred years old, it is not ancient. However, even if you did not have any outside knowledge about Versailles, this answer choice could still be eliminated. There is no indication of the age of Versailles in the prompt, so an age-related answer choice would probably be incorrect.

(C) is incorrect because *aristocratic* means characteristic of the noble class. Though palaces are characteristic of such a class, this is not the strongest answer choice. Aristocratic is not inherently synonymous with “awe-inspiring” or “opulent.”

(D) is incorrect because *austere* means unadorned. This would not be used to describe a palace that is the “embodiment of grandeur and opulence.”

4) 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 word is “amicably,” which describes what the “delegates” were not expected to be. The missing word comes after “however,” a word that implies a contrast between clauses. In this particular sentence, the contrast is a question of degree—no one expected the delegates to be amicable, but few expected them to be “as [un-amicable] as they were.” Thus, the missing word must be the opposite of amicable. Choice (A) provides such a word: *fractious* means unruly or quarrelsome.

(B) is incorrect because *civil* means polite. This word would not be used to describe the behavior of delegates who did not “get along amicably.”

(C) is incorrect because *raucous* means rowdy or disorderly. While this could theoretically describe the behavior of the delegates, it is not the strongest answer choice. The delegates were not “amicable” toward each other, but this does not necessarily imply that they were disorderly.

(D) is incorrect because *noisome* means stinking or foul smelling. No part of the prompt provides any information about the smell of the delegates.

(E) is incorrect because *impudent* means arrogant and rude. This word could theoretically work in context, but it is not the best answer choice. It does not explain the relationship between the delegates as well as choice (A) does. It could describe how the delegates behaved in general, but not how they acted toward each other.

5) **C**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. Here, the key word is “mass culture,” a phrase that the prompt compares to “art.” The missing word is likewise juxtaposed against “art,” specifically “high art.” The prompt indicates that pop art blurred the lines between “art and mass culture” and turned popular culture subjects into art. Thus, the missing word must refer to pop culture. Choice **(C)** is the best choice, as *plebeian* means belonging to the common people, just as “mass culture” belongs to the common people.

(A) is incorrect because *inglorious* means shameful or lacking fame. The prompt only indicates that “pop artists” turned “mass culture” into “high art.” It does not indicate that “mass culture” is necessarily shameful.

(B) is incorrect because *derivative* means unoriginal or copied. This is not a word that necessarily relates to the distinction “between art and mass culture.” Furthermore, since pop art “dispelled” previously held “notions” about art, it could not have been copied from existing art that adhered to these notions.

(D) is incorrect because *haute* means high-class or fancy. This word could describe the final product of pop art, but not the subjects of pop art. These subjects were originally part of the mundane “mass culture,” not fancy images of “high art.”

(E) is incorrect because *uncouth* means awkward or clumsy. The prompt only indicates that “pop artists” turned “mass culture” into “high art.” It does not indicate that “mass culture” is awkward or clumsy in any way.

6) **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 in the phrase “stated the meaning [...] so explicitly,” a phrase that is used to describe what the author of

the prompt wishes the poet had not done. The missing word describes how the poem actually was, not how the author wishes it had been. Since the author wished the poem had been more subtle, it must not have been subtle in reality. The missing word must mean unsubtle or obvious. Choice **(B)** is, therefore, the correct answer, since *perspicuous* means clearly expressed or easy to understand.

(A) is incorrect because *opaque* means difficult to understand. If the poet “explicitly” “stated the meaning of the poem,” then it probably was not difficult to understand.

(C) is incorrect because *apparent* means obvious or clear. While the poet “stated the meaning of the poem” in a very clear way, it does not make sense to describe the poem as a whole as obvious or clear.

(D) is incorrect because *ambiguous* means open to several interpretations. As such, this word cannot be used to describe a poem whose meaning was too “explicit.”

(E) is incorrect because *inconspicuous* means not noticeable. This word would describe how the author of the prompt wants the poem to be, but not how the poem actually was.