Name_____
Date_____

●Sentence Completion 6 *(low-advanced SAT level)*

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

1. Holmes was instantly _____ upon meeting the victim's widow; there was something about her he just did not trust.

   A. credulous
   B. leery
   C. bamboozled
   D. soothed
   E. solemn

2. _____ spending habits caused the rock star to squander most of his fortune, so that later in life he had to be something of a _____ and pinch every penny of every paltry royalty check he received.

   A. sagacious ... wastrel
   B. profligate ... miser
   C. egregious ... spendthrift
   D. reckless ... scapegoat
   E. stringent ... hoarder

3. The melting pot theory of American culture celebrates the ability of immigrants to _____ to American life and reject past ethnic differences to blend in with the rest of the American people.

   A. ravel
   B. rehabilitate
   C. prattle
   D. muddle
   E. assimilate

4. In order to avoid the death penalty, Galileo was forced to _____ his theories about a heliocentric universe to church authorities. According to legend, however, despite his public disavowal, Galileo could be heard defiantly muttering of the Earth, "And yet it moves."

   A. recapitulate
   B. update
   C. affirm
   D. recant
   E. reiterate

5. Thurgood Marshall's ability to overcome _____ is such _____ story: born the grandson of a slave, he fought racism and hardship to become the first African-American Supreme Court justice.

   A. persecution ... a lucid
   B. adversity ... an inspirational
   C. prosperity ... an uplifting
   D. maladies ... a stimulating
   E. poverty ... a challenging

6. As the artist listened to all the speakers' lauding speeches at her tribute banquet, she realized for the first time how much she was _____.

   A. mesmerized
   B. calumniated
   C. decried
   D. esteemed
   E. eroded

Answers and Explanations

1) **B**
   To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. Here, the key phrase comes after the semicolon, as the last clause of the prompt provides the definition of the missing word: Holmes "did not trust" the woman. Thus, the missing word must be a word that means untrusting. **(B)** provides such a word: *leery* means suspicious.

   (A) is incorrect because *credulous* means gullible or too trusting; it has the opposite meaning of the correct answer.

   (C) is incorrect because *bamboozled* means perplexed. While Holmes might have been interested in "the victim's widow," the prompt only makes it clear he did not trust her and does not explicitly state that she perplexed him.

   (D) is incorrect because *soothed* means calmed. Thus, it has nothing to do with anything in the prompt.

   (E) is incorrect because *solemn* means serious. Thus, it has nothing to do with anything in the prompt.

2) **B**
   To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. The key word for the first missing word is "squander," implying that the rock star wasted and lost all his money. The second missing word's key phrase is "pinch every penny," meaning the rock star had to be careful and save money later in life. **(B)** is the best answer choice, then, as *profligate* means wasteful and a *miser* means a stingy person.

   (A) is incorrect because *sagacious* means perceptive and *wastrel* means one who is profligate or wasteful. The words might work if their order were flipped (and sagacious took a noun form and wastrel took a verb form), but as it is, they do not work in context.

   (C) is incorrect because *egregious* means notorious and *spendthrift* means someone who wastes money. While egregious could possibly work in context for the first missing word, spendthrift is the opposite in meaning of the second missing word, as the second missing word refers to someone who pinches every penny, not someone who wastes money.

   (D) is incorrect because *reckless* means careless and *scapegoat* means someone who bears the majority of the blame for others. While careless could work for the first missing word, the second missing word has to refer to someone who saves money, not someone who takes the blame for others.

(E) is incorrect because *stringent* means severe and *hoarder* means one who stockpiles for future use. While hoarder could work for the second missing word, stringent does not work in context for the first missing word, as stringent does not relate to wasting money.

3) **E**

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 that follows the conjunction "and": "reject past ethnic differences to blend in." Thus, the missing word must be something that means the rejection of past identities to blend in to a new culture. *Assimilate* means cause to become homogeneous, and so **(E)** is the best answer.

(A) is incorrect because *ravel* means fall apart into tangles, and so it does not relate to any of the information in the prompt.

(B) is incorrect because *rehabilitate* means restore to proper condition. It, thus, has nothing to do with immigrants blending in to American culture.

(C) is incorrect because *prattle* means babble or talk incessantly. Nothing in the prompt discusses talking, so prattle cannot work for the missing word.

(D) is incorrect because *muddle* means confuse. It, thus, does not work in context, as the prompt does not indicate that immigrants get confused by American life.

4) **D**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. The key word here is "disavowal," which refers to a denial of something once claimed. Thus, Galileo must have been forced to deny "his theories about a heliocentric universe." **(D)** is right, then, as *recant* means disclaim or disavow.

(A) is incorrect because *recapitulate* means summarize. The prompt implies that Galileo had to do more than summarize his theories to the church, as he was forced to make a "public disavowal."

(B) is incorrect because *update* means modify to include new materials. The prompt implies that Galileo had to do more than modify his theories to the church, as he was forced to make a "public disavowal."

(C) is incorrect because *affirm* means restate in a positive manner. The prompt implies that Galileo actually did the opposite, as he was forced to make a "public disavowal."

(E) is incorrect because *reiterate* means to restate. The prompt implies that Galileo had to do more than restate his theories to the church, as he was forced to make a "public disavowal."

(E) is incorrect because *orthodox* means traditional, a word that would neither describe the Beat Generation nor one who moves from coast to coast.

5) **B**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. Here, the second missing word lacks a clear key word, but the first missing word lines up with "racism and hardship": the first clause states that Marshall was able to "overcome" the missing word, and the second one says he "fought racism and hardship." For the second missing word, the prompt requires an adjective that would describe Marshall's story. Since Marshall's story has hardship at first but ends positively, the missing adjective must be one that is positive in nature. Of the answer choices, choice **(B)** is best, as *adversity* means hardship and *inspirational* means imparting a state of mind that encourages creativity or action. It is, as such, a positive word that fits in context, as it implies that Marshall's story is encouraging to others.

(A) is incorrect because only one of the words works in context. *Persecution* means punishment or harassment for being of a certain race, gender, religion, or political opinion, which could work for describing the racism Marshall fought. However, *lucid* means clear, and Marshall's story has to be described in a positive way, not simply as clear or easy to see.

(C) is incorrect because only one of the words works in context. *Uplifting* means encouraging, and so it works for the second missing word, as it describes Marshall's story in a positive manner. However, *prosperity* means good fortune, not something one would need to overcome.

(D) is incorrect because only one of the words works in context. *Stimulating* means exciting and so it works for the second missing word, as it describes Marshall's story in a positive manner. However, *maladies* does not describe what Marshall had to overcome. Maladies are illnesses, and nothing in the prompt implies that Marshall was ill at any point in his life.

(E) is incorrect because only one of the words even slightly works in context. *Poverty* means insufficiency or lack of necessary resources. It could be a hardship Marshall would have had to overcome, though it would be a bit of a stretch, as the prompt does not suggest anything about Marshall's economic condition. In any case, *challenging* means difficult, and while Marshall's life may have been challenging, the story of his life is positive, not difficult.

6) **D**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words in the prompt. Here, the key word for the missing word is "lauding," implying that the artist would have realized how much she was praised or loved, as the only logical result of hearing "lauding speeches" is to feel lauded. *Esteemed* means respected or valued, and so choice **(D)** is the correct answer.

(A) is incorrect because *mesmerized* means hypnotized. There is no reason that lauding speeches would make the artist hypnotized.

(B) is incorrect because *calumniated* means defamed or maliciously misrepresented. There is no reason for lauding speeches to result in the artist feeling misrepresented, particularly in a very negative way.

(C) is incorrect because *decried* means disparaged or expressed disapproval of something or someone. There is no reason for lauding speeches to result in the artist feeling disparaged.

(E) is incorrect because *eroded* means ate away. There is no reason for lauding speeches to make the artist feel she has been eaten away.