



● Sentence Completion 9 *(low-advanced SAT level)*

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

1. A new lawsuit alleges that violent video games are far from being \_\_\_\_\_ and actually have devastating effects on the psyches of those who play them.  
A. harmful  
B. innocuous  
C. injurious  
D. infantile  
E. malicious
2. Though Shakespeare's plays evince a playwright who is well traveled and \_\_\_\_\_, the bard's existence was actually quite \_\_\_\_\_; he spent his entire life in Stratford-upon-Avon and London.  
A. worldly ... urbane  
B. ingenuous ... sophisticated  
C. ecumenical ... parochial  
D. rustic ... bucolic  
E. cosmopolitan ... provincial
3. While many conspiracy theories can at first seem \_\_\_\_\_, under scrutiny they typically all appear to be completely contrived and unbelievable.  
A. convoluted  
B. plausible  
C. incorrigible  
D. dubious  
E. suspect
4. The eccentric inventor Nikola Tesla was said to have \_\_\_\_\_ sense of science: he just naturally seemed to know how electricity worked.  
A. a skilled  
B. an innate  
C. an extrinsic  
D. a superficial  
E. a petulant
5. When a reader only \_\_\_\_\_ a work by Hemingway or fully reads it but does not absorb it, it is easy to miss the subtle complexity of the author's simple language; to fully understand it, one must \_\_\_\_\_ the text.  
A. scrutinizes ... neglect  
B. glances at ... overlook  
C. pores over ... analyze  
D. skims ... peruse  
E. audits ... assay
6. One dire consequence of the monsoon was that water \_\_\_\_\_ into the attic from the roof and continued to trickle down to the rest of the house, resulting in extensive water damage.  
A. soothed  
B. seared  
C. seeped  
D. severed  
E. sashayed

## Answers and Explanations

1) **B**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words in the prompt. The key words in this prompt come in the noun clause “devastating effects.” The missing word must be a word opposite in meaning of devastating effects, since the prompt implies that video games are devastating and are “far from being” the missing word. Thus, the missing word must mean harmless. Therefore, choice **(B)** is correct, as *innocuous* means harmless.

**(A)** is incorrect because *harmful* means causing negative effects. It is, thus, synonymous with “devastating effects,” but the missing word should have the opposite meaning.

**(C)** is incorrect because *injurious* means causing negative effects. It is therefore synonymous with “devastating effects,” but the missing word should have the opposite meaning.

**(D)** is incorrect because *infantile* means childish. While video games might be described as childish, the video games here discussed are violent video games, and the passage does not ever suggest that children are the ones playing the game, as it instead simply says “those who play them.”

**(E)** is incorrect because *malicious* means hateful. Nothing in the prompt suggests that violent video games are hateful or are thought to be hateful.

2) **E**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. Both words rely on the same key words, the phrase “well traveled,” but both missing words have a different relationship to the key words. The first must be similar in meaning, as the conjunction “and” implies similarity, while the second missing word must be opposite in meaning, as the construction of the prompt hinges on an opposite relationship made clear by the words “though” and “actually quite.” Moreover, the clause that appears after the colon is used to explain the second missing word and implies someone who did not travel much. Thus, while the first missing word means well traveled, the second one must mean not well traveled. Therefore, choice **(E)** is correct as *cosmopolitan* means worldly, while *provincial* means limited in outlook.

**(A)** is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Worldly* means well traveled, but *urbane* means suave. Nothing in the prompt suggests that Shakespeare was suave instead of worldly.

**(B)** is incorrect because neither word works in context. *Ingenuous* means naïve, while *sophisticated* means worldly-wise. The words might work if their order was flipped, but as written, they do not work in context.

(C) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. *Parochial* means narrow in mind, but it has no relationship to *ecumenical*, which means general or universal.

(D) is incorrect because both words imply a lack of worldliness, though the prompt requires one word that means worldly and one that does not. *Rustic* means pertaining to rural areas while *bucolic* means pastoral.

3) **B**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words in the prompt. The key words here are “contrived and unbelievable.” The prompt suggests that the missing word is one that means the opposite of this, as the construction of the prompt sets up an antithetical relationship: the theories appear one way at first but then appear contrived later on. Thus, the missing word must mean something akin to possible or believable. Therefore, choice (B) is correct, as *plausible* means having a show of truth.

(A) is incorrect because *convoluted* means overly complicated. Since the prompt implies that conspiracy theories do not appear contrived and unbelievable until after they’ve been scrutinized, convoluted does not make sense for the missing word.

(C) is incorrect because *incorrigible* means not correctable. It is, thus, not a word having any relationship to the key words of contrived and unbelievable.

(D) is incorrect because *dubious* means questionable. Since the prompt implies that conspiracy theories do not appear contrived and unbelievable until after they’ve been scrutinized, dubious does not make sense for the missing word.

(E) is incorrect because *suspect* means questionable. Since the prompt implies that conspiracy theories do not appear contrived and unbelievable until after they’ve been scrutinized, suspect does not make sense for the missing word.

4) **B**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words in the prompt. The key word here is “naturally,” which comes after the colon. A colon is used to separate explanatory information from the rest of a sentence, so everything after the colon in this sentence must elaborate on the first part of the sentence. Thus, the missing word must be one that implies a natural sense of science, since Tesla “naturally seemed to know how” a certain science worked. Therefore, choice (B) is correct, as *innate* means natural.

(A) is incorrect because *skilled* means proficient. While Tesla definitely had a proficient sense of science, the prompt takes it one step further by implying that it was one he naturally possessed.

(C) is incorrect because *extrinsic* means external or unessential. This is the opposite of a word that would work in context.

(D) is incorrect because *superficial* means trivial or of surface-level importance only. The passage never suggests that Tesla's sense of science was only trivial.

(E) is incorrect because *petulant* means touchy or easily annoyed. Nothing in the prompt implies that Tesla or his sense of science was easily annoyed, as the passage only states that he naturally knew how electricity worked.

5) **D**

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. Here, each missing word has its own key words. The first missing word relies on the phrase "fully reads" and the prompt suggests that by doing the action described, one would be doing two different things. Thus, the first word must mean something antithetical to fully reading. The second missing word relies on the phrase "does not absorb it." Because the second missing word is in the final clause, the one that explains how to fully understand a work by Hemingway, the second missing word must have the opposite meaning of does not absorb, meaning the second word must be a word that implies a full absorption of the text. Therefore, choice (D) is the best, as *skims* means to read in a cursory manner, which is the opposite of fully reading, and *peruse* means to read carefully, and doing so would certainly lead to a full absorption of the text.

(A) is incorrect because neither word works in context. *Scrutinizes* means examine closely, while *neglect* means failure to take reasonable care. The words could possibly work if their order were reversed but not as written.

(B) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Glances* means looks at briefly, while *overlook* means fails to see. The words are synonyms, but the prompt requires antonyms.

(C) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. *Analyzes* means studies carefully, but *pores* means studies industriously. The words are synonyms, but the prompt requires antonyms.

(E) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. *Assay* means analyzes, but *audits* means examines accounts. Since the passage is about books by Hemingway, not financial accounts, audits does not make sense in context.

6) **C**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words in the prompt. Here, the key phrase is "continued to trickle down." The prompt states that water did something (the missing word) then "continued to

trickle down.” Thus, water must have first entered the house, and the missing word must be a word that means either leaked or trickled. Of the answer choices, only **(C)** provides a word that means leaked or trickled: *seeped* means oozed or trickled.

**(A)** is incorrect because *soothed* means allayed or calmed and is, thus, a word that in no way would describe water entering a house or “one dire consequence thereof.”

**(B)** is incorrect because *seared* means burned. Water does not burn anything, so choice **(B)** does not work in context.

**(D)** is incorrect because *severed* means cut off or separated. Water does not in any way cut anything, so choice **(D)** does not work in context.

**(E)** is incorrect because *sashayed* means strutted or walked ostentatiously. Water cannot move in this manner, so this answer choice is incorrect.