

# Verbal Practice Section 2: Medium Difficult

20 Questions  
Time: 30 Minutes

For questions 1–6, select one entry for each blank from the corresponding column of choices.  
Fill in the blank in the way that best completes the text.

1. Cormack McCarthy writes in an idiom both spare and flowery, with paragraphs of short, declarative sentences interspersed with long, \_\_\_\_\_ passages of description and philosophizing.

boring
floral
baroque
classical
fictional

2. Simony is one of the three primary (i) \_\_\_\_\_ in Joyce’s *Dubliners*, recurring in almost every story in the collection. In some stories, the simony is more or less literal, with characters attempting to purchase salvation with money. In other stories, it arrives in a more (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ form.

Blank (i)	Blank (ii)
theses	spiritual
leitmotifs	pecuniary
characters	figurative

3. Mixed-media artist Mae Chevrette begins each painting by affixing to canvas a photo from her travels, then embedding \_\_\_\_\_ such as old maps and sheet music before applying paint. The final works, emblazoned with quotes as well as evidence of Chevrette’s extensive and wide-ranging travels, convey a sense of joyful \_\_\_\_\_.

Blank (i)	Blank (ii)
devices	philosophy
apocrypha	wanderlust
ephemera	anomie

4. Taxation of legal substances known to be of a (i) \_\_\_\_\_ nature necessarily threads a thin line; it threatens to (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ government support for consumption of a product the use of which it is rightly interested in



curtailing.

Blank (i)    Blank (ii)

noxious	legitimize
salubrious	incentivize
hortatory	signify

5. The newspaper’s essay contest soliciting defenses of anti-vegetarianism yielded only a handful of entries that did not allow authors’ (i) \_\_\_\_\_ to dictate their arguments: focusing on the seemingly universal human (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ for consuming animal products, these authors successfully navigated the gray area between simple self-justification and genuine apologia. The successful submissions argued not so much that desire or tradition could justify the current palate, but that the eradication of factory farming, the (iii) \_\_\_\_\_, and the return to natural feed can blunt the evils caused by its excesses.

Blank (i)    Blank (ii)    Blank (iii)

erudition	penchant	effacement of resources
proclivities	salutation	imputation of ecology
tenacity	earmark	mitigation of suffering

6. The long-term Senator began his career as an unrepentant (i) \_\_\_\_\_ for his party’s excesses, defending policies which posterity has since judged to be reactionary, even (ii) \_\_\_\_\_; more recently he has taken (iii) \_\_\_\_\_ line, denying that those very policies ever reflected the party’s values.

Blank (i)    Blank (ii)    Blank (iii)

critic	surreptitious	an analeptic
apologist	acerbic	an unconscionable
appellant	retrograde	a revisionist

Questions 7–9 are based on the following reading passage.

The increasing number of published scientific studies ultimately shown to have been based on erroneous data threatens not only reputations of individual scholars but also perceptions of the field as a whole. Since the general public often interprets such debunkings as evidence of malicious or conspiratorial intentions on the part of researchers, these incidents risk being construed as evidence that fraudulent practices pervade the discipline. Such conclusions are rendered all the more potent by the **rousing** prospect of exposing hypocrisy in a field that prides itself on its rigor. It would therefore behoove interested parties to go to lengths to demonstrate that such episodes, while incidentally regrettable, are not necessarily signs of malfeasance, and are in fact fully consistent with a healthy science. Indeed, the very practices of hypothesis-testing and scientific replication are in place precisely to redress such concerns. Spurious results may linger briefly in the communal ethos, but the more attention they garner for their ingenuity and impact, the more likely they are to be subjected to the crucible of attempted replication. Just as



- in a thriving garden, small weeds may crop up from time to time only to get pulled out at signs of trouble, so too in science do specious findings
- 15 occasionally attempt to infiltrate the canon only to get uprooted and tossed aside in the end by the inexorable process of scientific natural selection.

7. In the context of the passage, the word *rousing* is used to indicate that:

- (A) scientists often take deep satisfaction in adhering to their own rules.
- (B) people may find the chance to catch others in their own web to be galvanizing.
- (C) scientific non-experts are aware that their criticisms of more specialized areas of study could be construed as exposing hypocrisy.
- (D) uncertainty itself can be something that the general public finds exciting.
- (E) scientific revolutions often happen when most experienced academics least expect them.

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Consider each of the answer choices separately and indicate all that apply.

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8. The author of the passage would most likely defend which of the following scenarios as instances of “healthy science”?

- ☐ A young researcher discovers an important error in an established text and makes careful note of it in her personal logbook.
- ☐ A highly influential scholar publishes a controversial finding in a well-regarded journal only to be shown by follow-up studies to have inadvertently relied on an invalid statistical method.
- ☐ Unbeknownst to his collaborators, a scientist tweaks his data to be more consistent with a theory that has already won much empirical support.

9. Which of the following best describes the overall purpose of the passage?

- (A) To develop a scientific hypothesis and then describe evidence refuting it.
- (B) To argue that a problem which many people believe to be endemic to a specific domain is in fact much more widespread.
- (C) To encourage more robust dialogue between scientific experts and laypeople.
- (D) To highlight a possible interpretation of a phenomenon and then point out how that interpretation is mistaken.
- (E) To build support for a position, then contend that that position is fundamentally flawed.

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**Question 10 is based on the following reading passage.**

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Mayor of Middletown: Two years ago, in order to improve the safety of our town’s youth, I led the charge for a law requiring all bicycle riders to wear helmets when riding within city limits. My opponents claim the law is a failure because, last year, we had a higher incidence of bicycle accident victims with severe head injuries than in the previous year. The more important statistic, however, is the bicycle accident fatality rate, which has dropped nearly 30 percent since the law passed. Clearly, the helmet law has been a success.

10. Which of the following, if true, would best support the mayor’s claim that the helmet law has been a success?



- (A) If accident victims do not die as a result of a head injury, they often suffer from permanent brain damage.
- (B) While only 15 percent of all bicycle accidents resulting in injury occur as a result of a collision with a motor vehicle, those accidents represent 90 percent of fatal accidents.
- (C) In bicycle accidents, injuries to hands, knees, and elbows are far more common than head injuries.
- (D) Typically, fatality rates for bicycle accident victims who sustain serious head injuries are twice as high when the victims are not wearing helmets as when they are.
- (E) The effect of the helmet law in Middletown is typical; other towns also experienced a higher incidence of head injuries but a lower fatality rate.

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Questions 11–12 are based on the following reading passage.

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Ultraviolet radiation (with a wavelength in the range of 290 to 400 nanometers), visible light (400 to 760 nm), and infrared radiation (760 to 3,000 nm) are the three forms of energy that the earth receives from the sun. Within the ultraviolet spectrum, the three sub-categories are UVC (200–290 nm), UVB (290–320 nm), and UVA (320–400 nm). Most UVC rays do not reach the earth because ozone and other gases in the upper atmosphere absorb them, but exposure to this type of radiation from germicidal lamps and mercury lamps may still be hazardous. Excessive exposure to visible light is also thought to be harmful, but it is not of extreme importance with respect to prevention of skin damage. Most skin damage is caused by UVA and UVB radiation.

The amount of UVA that reaches the earth is ten times greater than UVB, but the amount of UVA need to produce sunburn in human skin is 800 to 1,000 times higher than UVB. **Nevertheless, UVA intensifies the sunburn effects of UVB through a delayed erythema and aids in cancer formation.** Thus, effective sunscreens and sun blocks must protect throughout both the UVB and UVA ranges.

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Consider each of the answer choices separately and indicate all that apply.

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11. Which of the following can be inferred from the passage?

- ☐ A form of energy with a wavelength in the range of 2,000 to 2,500 nanometers would not be categorized as ultraviolet radiation.
- ☐ UVB rays cannot cause cancer formation without the intensifying effects of UVA.
- ☐ Ultraviolet radiation is not a form of infrared radiation.

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Consider each of the answer choices separately and indicate all that apply.

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12. The highlighted sentence serves which of the following roles?

- ☐ provides a factual basis for creating sunscreens and sun blocks with certain properties.
- ☐ undermines an argument presented earlier in the passage.
- ☐ suggests that, within the wavelength range of ultraviolet radiation, radiation with wavelength lower than 320 nm can exacerbate the carcinogenic properties of radiation with a wavelength higher than 320 nm.



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**For questions 13–16, select the two answer choices that, when used to complete the sentence, fit the meaning of the sentence as a whole and produce completed sentences that are alike in meaning.**

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13. Even the most accomplished performers at times have difficulty with some of Rachmaninoff's more perilous passages—the composer seems often to have written his music with the deliberate intent to \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ flummox
- ☐ unnerve
- ☐ retract
- ☐ transmogrify
- ☐ distribute
- ☐ malign

14. Americans can scarcely suppose that all 100,000,000 speakers of Indian English are united in error; it is past time that we recognized that distinctively Indian constructions are not \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ fads
- ☐ solecisms
- ☐ idioms
- ☐ dialects
- ☐ pidgins
- ☐ lapses

15. The \_\_\_\_\_ adventurer Rickard Brawnson spends the majority of his autobiography trying to make his life sound like something out of an Indiana Jones movie, but in the end, according to some reviewers, it all comes off rather forced and unconvincing.

- ☐ hapless
- ☐ traitorous
- ☐ self-styled
- ☐ unlucky
- ☐ soi-disant
- ☐ intrepid

16. One of the more bizarre powers of the US presidency is the more or less \_\_\_\_\_ authority to grant pardons, negating months or even years of criminal litigation in an instant.

- ☐ impartial
- ☐ plenary
- ☐ unbiased
- ☐ executive
- ☐ sweeping
- ☐ tyrannical

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**Questions 17–20 are based on the following reading passage.**

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Long regarded as a necessary evil, the royal mistress is a classic staple of the French court. It was hardly a new trick for a monarch to use mistresses and political advisors as scapegoats, but the Bourbons did it with their own particular flare and brand of ceremony. Much of life in the French court was dictated by tradition, ritual, and custom, and the role of the mistress was

5 no exception to this. Mistresses were there to please the king and be the target for unwanted criticism, but they were also expected to stay out of political affairs.

This, of course, was hardly ever the case. The mistresses of Louis XIV, however, were rather well behaved in comparison to those of the future kings. Louis XIV fathered 13 illegitimate children with his mistresses over the course of his life. Thus, his many mistresses were often more concerned with securing rights for their illegitimate offspring than with meddling in affairs of the state. This lack of political meddling made them somewhat less prone to the tremendously harsh scrutiny faced later 10 by those of Louis XV. Additionally, Louis XIV's absolutist rule certainly had much to do with his mistresses remaining in their "proper places." Furthermore, Louis' strict control of the presses kept much of the harshest criticism at bay.

Nevertheless, there was still a steady stream of underground literature and cartoons that demonstrated abhorrence for many of Louis' paramours. What was important about the criticism that did proliferate against 15 his mistresses, however, was that it was used to great advantage by Louis XIV. Indeed, he used it to deflect criticism off of himself. By having an easily disposable female to shoulder the blame for various monarchical mishaps, Louis was able to 20 retain his appearance of absolute control and otherworldly perfection.

There would, however, be consequences for such skillful puppet-mastery in the coming century. Louis XIV was the singular architect of a vast veil of fictive space inlaid between him and his people, creating a dangerous precedent of masterful manipulation that could not be maintained to the same degree by later monarchs. It was clear that Louis XIV crafted this fictive space cleverly and with great skill, peppering it with self-promoting propaganda to control his image in the collective imagination of his people. His progeny, however, were simply not as adept at doing so. Even more 25 problematic, although future monarchs were not able to dexterously manipulate this fictive space themselves, it did not go away. Instead, it was the satirists, pamphleteers, and playwrights who took over its construction in the years leading up to the Revolution. In short, though it was Louis XIV who wrote his own mythology, Louis XVI would have his 30 written for him.

17. The primary purpose of the passage is to

- (A) critique the morals of the court of Louis XIV
- (B) discuss the popular opinion of French royal mistresses
- (C) contrast the mistresses of Louis XIV and Louis XV
- (D) suggest the main cause of the French Revolution
- (E) describe the utility and flaws of a political tradition

18. According to the passage, all of the following were reasons that the mistresses of Louis XIV were less problematic than those of Louis XV EXCEPT:

- (A) They were more concerned with securing the futures of their offspring.
- (B) There was little freedom for the press under Louis XIV.
- (C) They produced more offspring than did those of Louis XV.
- (D) Louis XIV was a skillful politician.
- (E) They were relatively uninterested in affairs of state.



Consider each of the answer choices separately and indicate all that apply.

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19. The passage suggests which of the following?

- ☐ Necessary evils are part of monarchies.
- ☐ Writing one's own mythology can be good statesmanship.
- ☐ Louis XIV viewed Louis XV as an unsatisfactory heir

20. The passage implies that

- (A) Louis XIV made mistakes that led to the Revolution
- (B) Louis XIV was a member of the Bourbon family
- (C) Louis XV wrote his own mythology
- (D) the most troublesome mistresses were those of Louis XVI
- (E) Louis XIV had more mistresses than Louis XVI