

MODULE 6 - SENTENCE COMPLETION

SENTENCE COMPLETION

Sentence Completion is a common test item in most competitive exams and Company tests. A sentence contains one or two blanks (usually), to be filled in using the choices. These questions test your vocabulary and knowledge of the finer distinctions among words. Sentences are composed of a number of words and ideas that are connected to one another in various ways. You are to figure out how the parts of the sentence are connected. A good vocabulary can be a great help here, but you can use many strategies for these questions, even without knowing all the choices.

Two types of questions expected in this section are- **Sentences with single blank and sentences with double blanks**. Let's understand the strategies for both types.

Trainer's Notes:

- Start the session by eliciting students' understanding of sentence completion.
- Then explain the concept- use the strategies given below.
- Examples provided in this handout are for trainer's reference. The trainers can use them or customize their own examples (as per the understanding level of the students) to explain each strategy.
- Emphasize on the importance of developing vocabulary to be able to do this section well
- While solving each question, spend few minutes on explaining the meanings and usage of new words from the questions.
- Ask them to write the meanings of the words in the handouts and file away the handouts for future reference and learning.

Strategies for Sentence Completion

1. Use sentence clues

Two things make a question difficult: difficult words and sentence structure. Hence we need to use the sentence clues by reading the sentence thoroughly.

Example 1: Crestfallen by having done poorly on the exam, Priya began to question her abilities. Her self-confidence was.....

- A. boosted **B. destroyed** C. placated D. elevated

Explanation: If somebody is crestfallen (despairing) and has begun to question herself, then her self-confidence would be destroyed. Here the clue word is crestfallen, which is negative. Hence the effect will also be negative. **Hence, the answer is (B).**

Example 2: Neem has _____ qualities and in many clinical trials, doctor have saved countless lives by using raw Neem leaves on serious wounds.

- A. remedial** B. flavouring C. inferior D. doubtful

Explanation: Clue words here are, clinical trials, doctor, saving lives, wound. Hence we need a positive word with a "life-saving"-like meaning. The obvious choice is A as the word remedy fits in the context.

2. Contrast indicators

In this type of sentence, one part of the sentence expresses an idea that is opposite to the idea in the other part of the sentence.

Following are some of the most common contrast indicators:

- But
- Yet
- Despite
- Although
- However
- Nevertheless
- Still
- while

Example 1: Zahid looks a noble person but he always becomes _____ any good deed.

- A. supporter of **B. obstacle for** C. swift to do D. promoter for

Explanation: Here in this example the signal word "but" indicates a contrast in the 2nd part of the sentence. Apparently, noble looking person should do wrong in the 2nd part of the sentence. Hence, the right choice is "obstacle for"

Example 2: The much-hated bill sparked off a wave of public _____ which could not be _____ by the concessions the British announced.

- A. enthusiasm...dampened B. clamour...misled C. curiosity...complemented
D. adoration...channelized **E. discontent...abated**

Explanation: Much-hated indicates a negative choice for the first blank, indicating anger or protest here. Hence we can safely eliminate options A, C & D as the word choices in these options are positive and they don't fit. Between the remaining choices- B & E, E is the right choice. When there is discontent or dissatisfaction and concessions are made to decrease the discontent, then it should abate (E). The word misled (B) doesn't fit logically in the context.

3. Support indicators

In this type of sentence, one part of the sentence expresses an idea, and the other part gives the explanation, elaboration or an example of that idea.

Indicators for Support

- Not only...but also
- In the same way
- Like
- Similarly
- For example
- For instance
- Such as
- Specifically
- And
- Also
- Furthermore
- In Addition

Example 1: Lahore city council representative promised that he would consider all suggestions from down town residents and that he was willing; not only to discuss his proposal, but also to _____ it.

- A. change B. vanish **C. accept** D. disapprove

Explanation: The structural construction of the sentence "not only ... but also" that the same idea should be in the "but also" part. Hence the right choice is option C

4. Cause & Effect indicators

In this type of sentence, one part of the sentence describes something that causes something in the other part of the sentence.

Indicators for Cause and Effect

- because
- so
- so that
- causes
- accordingly
- thus
- consequently
- hence
- therefore
- in order to

Example: Rizwana always wins the debate competition because she works _____ to prepare the topic.

- A. lazily **B. hard** C. continually D. spontaneously

Explanation: The first part of this sentence describes something - always win the debate competition - that is caused or influenced by what's described in the second part. Think over it,

"What causes to win the competition?" Only the word "hard" is the correct choice.

The two parts of the sentence are connected by the word "because" that indicates the cause and effect composition of the sentence.

5. Positive & Negative words

When you read the sentence, you have to look out for adjectives/adverbs and find out if the idea of the sentence is positive/negative. You need to mark all the words in the sentence with +/- . After that you need to compare the +/- signs on both parts/ blanks of the sentence and then make your choice accordingly. In simple words, if the flow of the first part of the sentence is positive and the second part is negative, then the blank must be negative to even the flow of the sentence. This would solve the sentence completion question without even understanding the question.

Example: Can public opinion be influenced so that it _____ rather than encourages the increase the sale of firearms?

A. advances B. changes C. discourages D. amplifies

Explanation: The best choice is D discourages. The clue here is rather than encourages. You need a verb that means the opposite of encourages. The best choice is discourages.

Idiomatic usage-based:

1. I want someone who is willing to dedicate himself to the job and will not----- --.

a. jump the gun

b. cut corners

c. cross the bridge when one gets there

d. get bent out of shape

Solution: To jump the gun is to do something too soon or to act hastily; to cross the bridge when one gets there is to not worry about a problem until one is faced with it; to get bent out of shape is to be extremely upset or angry.

The clue in the sentence is “willing to dedicate himself to the job and will not”, which indicates that it should be a person who will not take shortcuts in doing the work. So, cut corners, which means to take the quickest, easiest, or cheapest way, fits best in the blank.

2. The machinery in the factory is old and ----- . It is always-----.

a. worn out – breaking down

b. fallen apart – coming out

c. broken up – tearing down

d. worn away – giving away

Solution: The clues in the sentence are “machinery is old and...” and “always”. The words indicate that the machinery may be useless from long use and therefore always failing to function. So, Option A is the best option.

3. I can’t wait till I get to the climax of the book to ----- who the killer is.

a. make up

b. go along with

c. think over

d. find out

Solution: The clue in the sentence is “can’t wait till I get to the climax of the book”. The climax of a story is the high point of the story, where the mystery is revealed. So, find out is the best option.

4. In this day and age of social media, it is extremely easy to ----- someone based entirely on appearances.

a. look up to

b. look over

c. look at

d. look into

Solution: The clues in the sentence are “social media” and “based entirely on appearances”. The word admire or be enamored of someone fits into the blank because people admire someone they see on social media based only on superficialities or appearances. So, Option A is the best choice.

5. She could have gone places and achieved great things but her ego and her inability to get along with people -----

a. held her up

b. broke her down

c. held her back

d. held her down

Solution: The clues in the sentence are “could have gone places”, meaning that she could have risen to great heights, and “achieved great things” and the transition word ‘but’. The first part of the sentence indicates that she was capable of achieving a lot but her ego and inability to maintain relationships stopped her from doing so. So, Option C is the best choice.

6. He’s got a sharp He might just get into trouble if he isn’t careful.

a. tongue

b. mouth

c. intellect

d. vision

Solution: It can't be mouth and brain. Vision and intellect are positive and can't get into trouble. So, options B, C and D get eliminated. Hence option A.

7. His interest in the study of Forensic pathology is indeed very_____.

a. strong

b. large

c. deep

d. vast

Solution: Keyword: 'Study'

As per the word collocation rule, the appropriate adjective to go with the word 'study' is 'deep'. We always say deep study, not vast or strong or large study. Hence grammatically, the correct option is C- Deep.

8. Every week, in the office, one hour is_____to games and sports.

a. conferred

b. dedicated

c. conceded

d. devoted

Solution: Meanings:

Confer- to consult together

Concede-to acknowledge or admit.

Hence options A & C are eliminated.

Dedicate and devote have similar meanings- To set apart or concentrate on a particular pursuit. Hence we must choose between options B & D

When you read the sentence, it clearly mentions- one hour (time is the Keyword). You can't dedicate time. You can devote time. Devote one hour is correct instead of dedicate one hour.

Hence grammatically, the correct option is D- Devoted.

9. A committee has been_____to_____the transformation of the city into an International finance centre.

a. constituted....convert

b. appointed....oversee

c. converged. ..evaluate

d. inaugurated....determine

Solution: Key words: 'Committee & transformation'.

If you see the first blank, Option C doesn't fit grammatically. If you look at the second blank, options A, C, & D don't fit grammatically. Therefore, the correct option is B.

10. If you plan to go trekking, you must get yourself a sturdy pair of shoes that will give you good ----- on slippery surfaces.

a. tread

b. cover

c. purchase

d. tramp

Solution: The clues in the sentence are "trekking", "a sturdy pair of shoes", and "slippery surfaces. When one goes trekking or walking on slippery surfaces, one needs shoes with a good grip. In English, there are some words that have a common meaning and also an idiomatic or fixed usage. Purchase is one such word that also means grip. So, C is the best option.

Tread means to walk or the part of the sole of a shoe that rests on the ground.

Tramp means a beggar or to walk heavily.

Grammar-based:

1. The students ----- French next year.
a. is learning
b. must be learning
c. will have learnt
d. will be learning
2. I ----- on the presentation for two hours before I went to sleep.
a. have worked
b. had worked
c. will work
d. was working
3. The club has changed its administration and brought about some changes, but unfortunately ----- changes do not seem to include fair practices.
a. a
b. an
c. No article
d. the
4. The project is not due ----- a week, so I can afford to take it easy.
a. in
b. during
c. over
d. for
5. I had a lot of material on test preparation ----- I didn't know where to start.
a. but
b. and
c. moreover
d. so

Word-based:

1. The bus met with an accident and was _____ the traffic, so he had a hard time driving through the downtown.
a. obstructing
b. obviating
c. hiding
d. disturbing
2. Some people _____ themselves into believing that, they are the only honest and hardworking employees in the company.
a. keep
b. fool
c. delude
d. force
3. Apurva made some _____ remarks to the Indian Prime Minister. She was soundly chastised by his co-reporters.
a. irreverent
b. reverent
c. flattering
d. complimentary

4. James Hadley Chase was a _____ writer who intrigued readers with his plots that took unexpected twists.
a. profuse
b. copious
c. prolific
d. abundant
5. Saurav had the _____ experience of being seated next to a garrulous passenger on his recent train journey.
a. pleasant
b. quiet
c. nice
d. galling
6. My father did not approve of some of my friends and he said that I was _____ in choosing them.
a. choosy
b. selective
c. particular
d. indiscriminate
7. With his _____ eyesight, Raghav spotted the military jet streaking in the sky.
a. inferior
b. poor
c. keen
d. myopic
8. The government exhorted citizens to report any crime witnessed by them as otherwise it could be construed as being _____ in that crime.
a. disinterested
b. complicit
c. adept
d. absorbed
9. Moyna is _____ writing stories because she was well honed by her job as a reporter in a leading newspaper.
a. proficient in
b. incapable of
c. incompetent at
d. slovenly in
10. If you will not do your work on your own _____, I have no choice but to penalize you if it is not done on time.
a. preference
b. coercion
c. excursion
d. volition

2 blanks:

1. Challenges must be _____ to realize the _____ of a greater regional economic integration.
a. overcome ...potential
b. suppressed. ..power
c. ignored... benefits
d. sustained... advantages

2. For silent movies to succeed, the quality of acting has to be ____ as there are no _____ dialogues or music for support.
- mediocre ...engaging
 - sublime ...intimate
 - realistic... melodramatic**
 - extraordinary. ...mesmerizing
3. Sports for the visually challenged, _____ their confidence and help them to mingle with the _____ of society.
- plummet... elite
 - boost....mainstream**
 - abate... cream
 - curb... best
4. Although he puts in _____ of overtime and takes only a few holidays, he _____ cannot support his family.
- sufficient. ...however
 - lot... besides
 - much. ...thus
 - plenty... still**
5. I have never _____ such a problem and therefore confess I have no _____ to it.
- left alone ...inhibitions
 - chickened at... solution
 - dreaded. ...panacea
 - come across. ...ready-made answer**
6. The Maruti has become so _____, that snobbish customers, who believe their tastes are superior to others, are _____ buy this car of the masses.
- reputed. ...shirking from
 - sought after... queuing to
 - ubiquitous... disinclined to**
 - affordable. ...waiting to
7. Technology may have changed the way alliances are fixed in India (now at the click of a button) but the _____ still is arranged marriages with even most youngsters _____ the practice.
- preference ...loathing
 - norm ...endorsing**
 - practice ...customizing
 - tradition. ...avoiding
8. The city remained _____ for years after the hurricane's destruction. Efforts to rebuild were largely _____.
- blighted... successful
 - underwater... effective
 - barren... isolated
 - desolate....abortive**
9. _____ clearly when giving a speech. You will be misunderstood if you slur your speech or _____.
- pontificate... whisper
 - enunciatemumble**
 - speak articulate
 - murmur drawl
10. The famous pop singer tragically died at age fifty. This was an _____ loss for his _____ fans.

- a. awful... healthy
- b. amazing... dubious
- c. irreparable... devoted**
- d. emotional... heavy

Home Exercise:

1. I ran back to the cafe in which I had had lunch and _____, but nobody had seen my phone.

- a. asked around**
- b. asked to
- c. asked over
- d. asked aside

2. The show, which began very well and had some interesting twists and turns, has now _____ to a run-of-the-mill family melodrama.

- a. set up
- b. struck down
- c. given up
- d. boiled down**

3. She hadn't eaten all day, and by the time she got home she was _____.

- a. impaired
- b. exhausted
- c. ravenous**
- d. pallid

4. Mustaq unwittingly _____ the burglar by giving him way and ensuring his escape.

- a. blocked
- b. abetted**
- c. coerced
- d. halted

5. The manager would _____ her subordinates into a discussion by asking a few searching questions.

- a. hound
- b. subdue
- c. prejudice
- d. provoke**

6. While grizzly bears have long, flat, and somewhat blunt claws, black bears have short, curved, _____ claws.

- a) obtuse
- b) abominable
- c) barren
- d) acute**

7. The kenjogo or humble language used in Japanese to refer to oneself and the sonkiego or honorific language used to describe the interlocutor are often toned down in English translation, as more accurate renderings might sound _____ to an ear accustomed to more egalitarian phrasings.

- a) servile**
- b) loquacious
- c) hostile
- d) circumspect

8. The doctor takes note of any _____ blemishes on the patient's skin; such abnormalities are often _____ of skin cancer.

a. irregular. ..symptoms

b. typical... clues

c. small ...indications

d. common... causes

9. While other corporations have _____ as a result of the economic depression, ours has _____.

a. decreased. ..declined

b. improved....spread

c. suffered ...grown

d. disappeared.. retreated

10. Due to Blake's _____ attitude, many were _____ to trust him as camp counselor.

a. good. ..unwilling

b. apathetic. ..compelled

c. positive ...hesitant

d. uncaring. ..reluctant

11. It is clear that there is a _____ in their midst. Yet, the _____ soldiers hesitate to accuse one of their own.

a. traitor... loyal

b. weapon. ..dangerous

c. general. ..disrespectful

d. enemy. ...cunning

12. Attendance is not _____; employees are _____ to arrive at the meeting at 8:00 sharp.

a. expected. ..demanded

b. practical. ..needed

c. optional...required

d. necessary. ..challenged

13. The _____ mountain peaks soared up into the clouds, while the cool riverbed lay low in the _____.

a. compact....apex

b. bottomless....pinnacle

c. distant. ..point

d. towering....valley

14. The audience at the performance was _____. Dancers were repeatedly _____.

a. gracious....criticized

b. disrespectful. ..praised

c. supportive.... applauded

d. helpful.....ostracized

15. Though we may not always agree with the politicians in power, living in a democracy is a _____. People in many parts of the world don't enjoy similar _____.

a. burden... expectations

b. right. ..oppression

c. privilege ...liberties

d. advantage... dangers

16. The practice of purchasing books was primarily a _____ of the well-to-do until the early 1900s, when the increased popularity of dime novels, an expansion of the number of bookstores, and the introduction of the paperback made books _____ the average man.

a. tragedy... dislikable to

b. prerogative.....attainable to

- c. plight.....excitable to
- d. privilege.....achievable by

17. As Molly was practising Spanish with her friends before their trip to Chile, she discovered that although she could comprehend her friends, she could not _____ her thoughts in the _____ language.

- a. acknowledge inherent
- b. articulate.....unfamiliar**
- c. disencumber..... objective
- d. enunciate..... familiar

18. There are as yet no vegetation types or ecosystems whose study has been _____ to the extent that they no longer _____ ecologists.

- a. exhausted..... interest**
- b. prevented.....hinder
- c. delayed..... require
- d. undertaken...involve

19. Since 1813, reaction to Jane Austen's novels has oscillated between _____ and condescension; but in general later writers have esteemed her works more highly than did most of her literary _____.

- a. dismissal...admirers
- b. adoration contemporaries**
- c. disapproval...precursors
- d. reverencecritics

20. Whereas the art critic Vasari saw the painting entitled the Mona Lisa as an original and wonderful _____ feat, the reproduction of a natural object, the aesthetes saw it as _____ that required deciphering.

- a. collaborativean aberration
- b. technical...a hieroglyph**
- c. historical...an illusion
- d. archaica puzzle