

VOCABULARY BUILDING

☞ SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMS

SYNONYMS:

What are Synonyms?

Synonyms are words that substitute in a context for another words. Synonym is nothing but the similar meaning of a particular word or its semantic relation.

SYNONYM IS A WORD OR A PHRASE THAT MEANS THE SAME AS ANOTHER WORD OR A PHRASE IN THE SAME LANGUAGE.

Synonyms add interest and life to reading and writing. Synonyms can be any part of speech, as long as both members of the pair are the same part of speech. Generally, you wouldn't use more than two synonyms in the same sentence. Instead, to give variety to a paragraph, you'd use a synonym as a similar word to avoid repeating the same words from sentence to sentence or paragraph to paragraph. An example of synonyms is the words car and automobile.

More examples of English synonyms are:

Noun

"student" and "pupil"

"petty crime" and "misdemeanour"

Verb

"buy" and "purchase"

Adjective

"sick" and "ill"

Adverb

"quickly" and "speedily"

Preposition

"on" and "upon"

Note that synonyms are defined with respect to certain senses of words; for instance, pupil as the "aperture in the iris of the eye" is not synonymous with student. Similarly, he expired means the same as he died, yet my passport has expired cannot be replaced by my passport has died.

In English, many synonyms evolved from the parallel use, in the early medieval period, of Norman French (from Latin) and Old English (Anglo-Saxon) words, often with some words being used principally by the Saxon peasantry ("folk", "freedom", "bowman") and their synonyms by the Norman nobility ("people", "liberty", "archer").

Examples

Synonyms of Long:

elongated, lengthy, outstretched, extended

Synonyms of Create:

Cause, make, construct

Synonyms of Small:

Little, Mini, short, tiny, fine, petite

Synonyms of Jump:

Leap, Bounce, Hop, Vault, Spring

STEPS FOR FINDING THE SYNONYM/ANTONYM OF A WORD

- Try to put the word in a sentence or a phrase and guess its meaning
- When you have a word try to guess all its synonyms and from the answers see the exact word which has the same meaning, in the case of antonym the opposite meaning
- Read all the options, most of us think of time and come up with the answer which has close match to the word. But there is an actual word with the same meaning hidden there.
- First know the part of the speech the word is used in... For example the word run can be used as a verb but it could also be used as noun like 'home run' so make sure you know the part of speech before answering.

Some words are eye catchy, you immediately think it's going to be the antonym/synonym, but most of the guesses are not going to be right so go through the options once again unless you are sure of the answer.

EXAMPLE:

MALIGNED

(a) beneficent (b) magnanimous (c) downtrodden (d) destitute (e) elegant

In the example, we are trying to find the best antonym for the word maligned. So, we should begin by ascertaining its charge. The prefix, "mal" is typically used in negatively charged words. Therefore, the answer will likely have a positive charge. Let's go through the list to see how each word is charged. A) beneficent (+) B) magnanimous (+) C) downtrodden (-) D) destitute (-) E) elegant (=) After labeling each, we are left with two words that are positively charged: beneficent and magnanimous.

Even if you don't know the meaning of any answer choices, you have narrowed your choices down to two and are left with a 50% chance of answering correctly. This is a quick technique that can be very beneficial when attempting to answer a question with several words that you are unsure about.

RESTIVE

(a) patient (b) rigorous (c) deceptive (d) active

The word, restive, is tricky, because it sounds like it has something to do with rest. Therefore, D) active would be the best antonym. However, this is a trick. Restive actually means restless. So, the correct answer is patient, a good antonym for restless.

FOMENT

(a) mitigate (b) engender (c) check (d) mollify (e) satiate

The words mitigate and mollify are close synonyms. The both mean "to reduce or soften in pain or intensity, to make less severe." This leaves only three remaining viable answer choices.

EXERCISE 1

Directions for Q1 to Q10: Choose the appropriate synonyms for the following:

1. AMBIENCE
(a) Institution (b) Atmosphere (c) Assembly (d) Encounter
2. PERPLEXITY
(a) Conundrum (b) Question (c) Impudence (d) Unabashedness

3. UBIQUITOUS
(a) Omnipresent (b) Undesirable (c) Efficient (d) Luxurious
4. QUERULOUS
(a) Inquisitive (b) Thirsty (c) Depressed (d) Sullen
5. EPHEMERAL
(a) Ornamental (b) Short-lived (c) Untrue (d) Eternal
6. BURDENSOME
(a) Blunt (b) Waspish (c) Taxing (d) Untimely
7. PERSIST
(a) Forget (b) Endure (c) Induce (d) Ponder
8. SCEPTICISM
(a) Indifference (b) Unstable (c) Concern (d) Suspicion
9. VOLATILE
(a) Unstable (b) Steady (c) Homogenous (d) Stagnate
10. FLAMBOYANT
(a) Dull (b) Ornate (c) Proud (d) Costly

EXERCISE 2

Directions for Q1 to Q10: Replace the italic words in the following sentences with the word closest in meaning from the given options, without changing the meaning of the sentence.

1. The twins *bickered* constantly over petty issues.
(a) Conferred (b) Rebuffed (c) Squabbled (d) Concede
2. As a young boy, he used to be uncomfortable at public gatherings, this would make him the most *unlikely* orator.
(a) Effective (b) Gregarious (c) Improbable (d) Fervent
3. The qualities of the native music were not *ignored* by the foreign settlers.
(a) Revered (b) Remarked on (c) Neglected (d) Discerned
4. In later years, she grew *reclusive* and shunned company.
(a) Notorious (b) Dispassionate (c) Withdrawn (d) Ambivalent
5. Sometimes facts are *uncertain* and data is hard to come by.
(a) Relevant (b) Ineluctable (c) Elusive (d) Established
6. During the military takeover, some of the clauses of the constitution were *suspended*.
(a) Inoperative (b) Notarized (c) Promulgated (d) Undefined
7. The author ridicules *conventional* notions of truth.
(a) Unusual (b) Standard (c) Boring (d) Passive
8. Her love for dance was *insatiable*.
(a) Unchanging (b) Undesirable (c) Irreconcilable (d) Unquenchable

9. The documents provided in the court were *fabricated*.
(a) Genuine (b) Historical (c) Prepared (d) Forged
10. He is quite *sanguine* about his results.
(a) Depressed (b) Anxious (c) Optimistic (d) Pessimistic

ANTONYMS:

An antonym is a word that is the opposite meaning of another. It comes from the Greek words "anti" for opposite and "onym" for name. Since language is complex, people may at times, disagree on what words are truly opposite in meaning to other words.

Categories of Antonyms

There are three categories of antonyms:

1. Graded Antonyms

Graded Antonyms deal with levels of the meaning of the words, like if something is not "good", it may still not be "bad." There is a scale involved with some words, and besides good and bad there can be average, fair, excellent, terrible, poor, or satisfactory.

Example:

- Last and first
- Foolish and wise
- Abundant and scarce
- Dark and light
- Dangerous and safe
- Clever and foolish
- Early and late
- Empty and full
- Smart and dumb
- Risky and safe
- Bad and good
- Pretty and ugly
- Best and worst
- Rich and poor
- Cool and hot
- Wet and dry
- Late and early
- Ignorant and educated
- Big and small
- Optimistic and pessimistic
- Excited and bored
- Dull and interesting

2. Complementary Antonyms

Complementary antonyms have a relationship where there is no middle ground. There are only two possibilities, either one or the other.

- Dead and alive
- Off and on
- Day and night
- Absent and present
- Exit and entrance
- Sink or float
- True or false
- Input and output
- Interior and exterior
- Exhale and inhale

3. Relational Antonyms

Relational antonyms are sometimes considered a subcategory of complementary antonyms. With these pairs, for there to be a relationship, both must exist.

Example:

- Doctor and patient
- Buy and sell
- Predator and prey
- Above and below
- Teach and learn
- Instructor and pupil
- Servant and master
- Borrow and lend

EXAMPLE

Choose the best antonym.

Restive

- (a) Patient (b) Rigorous (c) Deceptive (d) Active (e) Cautious

Solution:

The word, restive, is tricky, because it sounds like it has something to do with rest. Therefore, option (D) active would be the best antonym. However, this is a trick. Restive actually means restless. So, the correct answer is patient, a good antonym for restless

Tips to Solve Antonym Questions

Take note of positively and negatively charged answer choices. It is possible to associate a negative or positive charge with almost any given word. Try to discern whether each word in the following list has a positive (+), negative (-), or neutral (=) charge.

1. Capricious
(a) Approximate (b) Capricious (c) Rational (d) Discretionary
2. Dexterous
(a) Able (b) Active (c) Acute (d) Inexpert
3. Gumption
(a) Sagacity (b) Initiative (c) Nerve (d) Apathy

4. Tacit
(a) Punish (b) Dictated (c) Grand (d) Small
5. Inordinate
(a) Moderate (b) Wanton (c) Wasteful (d) Dizzying
6. Reprisal
(a) Sympathy (b) Avengement (c) Avenging (d) Retaliation
7. Facile
(a) Ready (b) Profound (c) Simple (d) Shallow
8. Vanity
(a) Arrogance (b) Display (c) Humility (d) Pretension
9. Retaliate
(a) Depart (b) Settle (c) Recompense (d) Get
10. Abstain
(a) Withhold (b) Continue (c) Starve (d) Refrain

ONE WORD SUBSTITUTION

1. Extreme old age when a man behaves like a fool
(a) Imbecility (b) Senility (c) Dotage (d) Superannuation
2. One who possesses many talents
(a) Versatile (b) Nubile (c) Exceptional (d) Gifted
3. Words inscribed on tomb
(a) Epitome (b) Epistle (c) Epilogue (d) Epitaph
4. The custom or practice of having more than one husband at same time
(a) Polygyny (b) Polyphony (c) Polyandry (d) Polychromy
5. In a state of tension or anxiety or suspense
(a) Off balance (b) Depressed (c) Diffused (d) On tenterhooks
6. Something which is not through or profound
(a) Superficial (b) Superstitious (c) Superfluous (d) Supernatural
7. To mediate between two parties in a dispute
(a) Interfere (b) Interact (c) Interrupt (d) Intercede
8. Commencement of words with the same letter:
(a) Pun (b) Alliteration (c) Transferred epithet (d) Oxymoron
9. A remedy for all diseases:
(a) Narcotics (b) Antiseptic (c) Panacea (d) Lyric
10. Use of force or threats to get someone to agree to something:
(a) Coercion (b) Conviction (c) Confession (d) Cajolement
11. Open to injury or Criticism :
(a) Invincible (b) Vulnerable (c) Naive (d) Sensitive

12. A person who is indifferent to pains and pleasure of life:
(a) Stoic (b) Sadist (c) Psychiatrist (d) Aristocrat
13. One who able to use the right and left hands equally well:
(a) Sinister (b) Ambidextrous (c) Ambivalent (d) Amateur
14. Story of old time gods or heroes is:
(a) Lyric (b) Epic (c) Legend (d) Romance
15. A lady who remains unmarried:
(a) Spinster (b) Artist (c) Bachelor (d) Misanthrope

Directions for Q16 to Q25: From the four alternatives in each question, select the word which can be substituted for the given phrase/sentence.

16. Force someone to go somewhere with you, often using threats or violence
(a) Abduction (b) Adjudicate (c) Recluse (d) Lynch
17. Husband's (or wife's) provision for a spouse after separation or divorce; maintenance
(a) Bounty (b) Charity (c) Alimony (d) Limbo
18. Member of a group of people who move from place to place instead of living in one place all the time
(a) Refugee (b) Nomad (c) Pedestrian (d) Reverend
19. Person who does not have expert knowledge of a particular subject
(a) Layoff (b) Buff (c) Quack (d) Layman
20. Having the letters q, w, e, r, t, and y arranged in a row in the top row of letter keys
(a) Chronology (b) Qwerty (c) Wrest (d) Quid pro quo
21. View or sight that looks like a picture
(a) Tabloid (b) Graffiti (c) Dekko (d) Tableau
22. Law or regulation made by a city or town government
(a) Ordnance (b) Ordinance (c) Legacy (d) Jurisdiction
23. Plan of a journey, including the route and the places that you visit
(a) Folio (b) Ploy (c) Itinerary (d) Topography
24. Corrupt behaviour in a position of trust, especially in public office
(a) Malpractice (b) Malinger (c) Malaise (d) Potpourri
25. Period of temporary economic decline during which trade and industrial activity are reduced
(a) Inception (b) Locus standi (c) Recession (d) Tete-a-tete

WORD PAIRS

Certain words go together like *bread and water*. *Bread and water* is an example of a word pair that is always used in that order. In other words, we don't say *water and bread*. This type of word pair is called non reversible. In many ways, they are like collocations — words that usually go together.

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. Day and | 16. Hide and |
| 2. Fish and | 17. Out and |
| 3. Coming and | 18. Forgive and |

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 4. Well and | 19. Wear and |
| 5. High and | 20. Fair and |
| 6. Ins and | 21. Safe and |
| 7. Here and | 22. Hot and |
| 8. Brush and | 23. Cats and |
| 9. Black and | 24. Lock and |
| 10. Now and | 25. Down and |
| 11. Bits and | 26. Sixes and |
| 12. High and | 27. Free and |
| 13. Backwards and | 28. Fast and |
| 14. Hard and | 29. Out and |
| 15. Nuts and | 30. Length and |

Directions for Q31 to Q40: Complete the word pair in each of the following sentences.

31. There must first be **law and** ____ in the country before elections can be held.
32. The aim of the campaign was, **first and** ____ to make the public aware of the dangers of obesity.
33. The result of the election was declared ____ **and void** because of massive vote-buying.
34. Why bring up old quarrels that have lain ____ **and buried** all these years?
35. It is grossly unfair that only the senior staff and not the ____ **and file**, are entitled to paid leave.
36. "I'm telling you all ____ **and now** that you are all fired," bellowed the boss.
37. You can trust Sandra to do a good job as she is a professional ____ **and through**.
38. Although he has owed me a few thousand dollars, he is paying me back in dribs and ____ as he has just started working.
39. The children were having a **rough-and-** ____ when one of them hurt his hand.
40. It is simply unthinkable that he could have committed such a hideous crime against his own ____ **and blood**.

Directions for Q41 to Q50: Complete the following sentences with words pairs being used as **nouns**.

41. There was a great ____ among the residents when the authorities decided to close down the public swimming pool.
42. The ____ of the island were almost wiped out by the catastrophic volcanic eruptions.
43. Life is rarely easy. Most of us at some time or other have to go through ____.
44. He could not sleep a wink as he ____ the whole night, thinking about the impending trial.
45. The speaker stood on the platform ____ away about the high cost of living and the scarcity of jobs.
46. When all is ____, you will have legal possession of the house.
47. Some candidates have resorted to ____ tactics to get the people to vote for them in the elections.
48. I really admire Nancy for devoting herself ____ to the mission of saving lives.
49. The shuttle bus runs ____, ferrying passengers between the airport and the downtown area.
50. The frightened little girl was seen running ____, screaming for her mother.

☞ SPELLINGS

Spellings in English can be quite confusing. This is probably why verbal ability tests include them. Spellings can be tested in several ways.

Type 1

Choose the correctly spelt word.

E.g.: (a) accomadate (b) accommodate (c) accomodate (d) acomodate

Ans: [b]

Type 2

Fill in the blanks using the correctly spelt options.

E.g.: Confidence is ____ to build a great ____.

(a) necessary, carrier

(b) neccessary, carrier

(c) necessary, career

(d) nessaccery, carreer

Ans: [c]

Type 3

Choose the sentence having no spell errors.

E.g.: (a) Effective communication is the keystone to better productivity.

(b) Looks like their differences are irrevocible.

(c) I have been forced to learn English grammer.

(d) Chocolates are irresistable.

Ans.: Option (a). The correct spellings are 'irrevocable', 'grammar' and 'irresistible'.

Approach Methodology

In the case of spelling exercises where you have to identify the correctly spelt word, here's a simple method to follow.

Step 1: Glance at the question just long enough to catch the word tested. Beware: Do not analyse the word options.

Step 2: Turn away from the question and write the word on a paper without much thought. You are likely to be correct especially if you have sufficient English exposure.

Some Basic Spelling Trivia

1. Which comes first? 'I' or 'E'? Normally 'I' comes before 'E' except after 'C', words that rhyme with hay' and certain other exclusions.

E.g.: 'I' before 'E' → achieve, believe, handkerchief, hygiene, patient, pierce

'E' before 'I' → ceiling, conceit, deceive, perceive, receive, receipt

'E' before 'I' → beige, freight, neighbour, sleigh, vein, weight

'E' before 'I' → either, foreign, forfeit, leisure, neither, seize, weird

2. A final 'Y' changes to 'I' when an ending is added.

E.g.: Supply – Supplies

Merry – Merrier

Exceptions: (i) When the ending is 'ing',

E.g.: Study – studying, cry – crying

(or)

(ii) When the 'Y' is preceded by a vowel.

E.g.: Obey – Obeyed, Sway – Swaying

3. A silent 'E' is dropped when adding an ending that begins with a vowel.

E.g.: Advance + ing = Advancing

Pursue + ance = Pursuance

However, the 'E' remains when the ending begins with a consonant, unless the 'E' is preceded by a vowel.

E.g.: Like + ness = Likeness

Improve + ment = Improvement

Argue + ment = Argument

True + ly = Truly

4. Adding a prefix rarely changes the spelling of a word.

E.g.: Unnecessary, Disregard, Antibiotic, Mismanagement

5. Plurals are formed in English by adding 'S' or 'ES'.

i. For words that end in 'SS', 'SH', 'CH' or 'X', add 'ES'.

E.g.: Switch – Switches

ii. In case of plurals for words ending in a consonant plus 'Y', change the 'Y' to 'I' and add 'ES'. For proper nouns, keep the 'Y'.

E.g.: Company – Companies

iii. For most nouns ending in 'F' or 'FE' add 'S'. However, for some you have to change the 'F' to 'V' and add 'S' or 'ES'. There is no rule to follow here.

E.g.: Belief – Beliefs, Giraffe – Giraffes

Half – Halves

iv. For most nouns ending in 'O', add 'S'. However, for some you have to add 'ES'. Again, there is no rule here.

E.g.: Curio – Curios, Silo – Silos, Studio – Studios

Domino – Dominoes, Embargo – Embargoes,

Potato – Potatoes

v. Irregular plurals just have to be memorised.

E.g.: Analysis, Analyses, Focus – Foci, Goose – Geese, Phenomenon – Phenomena

6. When adding an ending (like 'ed', 'ing', etc.) to a word that ends in a consonant, we double that consonant when

- the ending begins with a vowel,
- the last syllable of the word is accented and that syllable ends in a single vowel followed by a single consonant.

E.g.: Admit + ed = Admitted, Begin + ing = Beginning, Control + able = Controllable

'Admit', 'Begin' and 'Control' are accented on the last syllable and the final consonant is preceded by a vowel, so we double the 'T', 'N' and 'L' respectively.

Flap + ed = Flapped

'Flap' contains only one syllable which means it has to be accented.

Despair + ed = Despaired

In 'despair', the final consonant is preceded by two vowels, so we don't double it.

7. Sometimes words have silent letters. These follow patterns that can be memorized.

gn, pn, kn = n		
gnome	pneumonia	knife
rh, wr = r		
rhyme	wrestle	
pt, ght = t		
ptomaine	height	
ps, sc = s		
psalm	science	
wh = h		
whole		

8. Determine whether the word is used as noun or a verb. For certain words, the noun form has 'C' while the verb form has 'S' in the place of 'C'.

E.g.: My father gave me some valuable advice. (Here, 'advice' is a noun meaning 'guidance' or 'suggestion'.)

I have to advise my friend to stop smoking. (Here, 'advise' is a verb meaning to 'counsel' or 'give advice'. Similarly, we have device – devise, practice – practise, prophecy – prophesy, etc.

EXERCISE 1

Correct the spelling mistakes in the paragraph.

- George new that he shouldn't drink alchohol on a Wednesday night, especially since his governmet proffesor had schedualed an important exam on Thrusday. However, he beleived he would loose his friends if he didn't go out with them. The pressure to fit in with his peers was worst then the fear of bad grades. To be popular among his friends, one had to be either a musclar athelete or a wild and crazy drinker. George realy could not concieve how it was posible for a student to consume huge quanities of liquor and still suceed in school. Maybe the drinkers were just more brilliant than he was. He didn't even enjoy the passtime of spending ours in a bar trying to persue a temperary feeling of excitement and "fun." Somehow he expected the cheif of campus security to catch him and the university administration to expell him. But George didn't posses enough courage to express

his opinion to his friends. He was certain they would tell him to mind his own business. Also, he didn't want to be separated from his friends. So he planned to meet them at a local restaurant, have a few drinks, leave early, take some aspirin, and spend a few hours studying for the exam.

EXERCISE 2

- My father keeps all his _____ papers in a lock.
(a) Confidential (b) Confidential (c) Confidential (d) Confidential
- The police _____ the mob.
(a) Dispersed (b) Dispersed (c) Dispersed (d) Dispersed
- The photographs in the papers bore no _____ at all to the originals.
(a) Resemblance (b) Resemblance (c) Resemblance (d) Resemblance
- A legislation passed to punish brokers who _____ their clients funds.
(a) Embezzle (b) Embezzle (c) Embezel (d) Embezzle
- That charming girl was the _____ of all eyes.
(a) Synosure (b) Shynosure (c) Cynosure (d) Cynosore
- Subash Chandra Bose was a _____ leader.
(a) maverick (b) maverik (c) maveric (d) mavarik
- Daniel's actions are _____.
(a) inane (b) inene (c) incane (d) inan
- Jagan's decision of leaving the work was not _____.
(a) impitus (b) impetos (c) impetuous (d) impetous
- The interviewer is _____ with the interviewees.
(a) dour (b) dore (c) duor (d) doar
- Whenever my friend is angry she wants me to be _____.
(a) lacnic (b) laconic (c) laconec (d) laconik

EXERCISE 3

Tick the correctly spelt word

- (a) Favourite (b) Favorete (c) Favouritte (d) Favorite
- (a) Successful (b) Successful (c) Sucesful (d) Successfull
- (a) Accommodation (b) Acommodation (c) Acomodation (d) Accomodation
- (a) Embarassed (b) Embarrassed (c) Embarased (d) Embaarased
- (a) Assistant (b) Assisstant (c) Asistant (d) Asisstant
- (a) Neccessary (b) Necessary (c) Necessary (d) Neccesary
- (a) Bussiness (b) Bussines (c) Business (d) Business
- (a) Gaurantee (b) Guarantee (c) Gaurantee (d) Guarantte
- (a) Fourty (b) Forty (c) Fortey (d) Fourtey
- (a) Achevie (b) Acheieve (c) Acheive (d) Achieve

☞ IDIOMS AND ANALOGY

IDIOMS

What are idioms?



Definition:

An **idiom** (also called **idiomatic expression**) is an expression, word, or phrase that has a figurative meaning conventionally understood by native speakers. This meaning is different from the literal meaning of the idiom's individual elements. In other words, idioms don't mean exactly what the words say. They have, however, hidden meaning.

Examples

- "Kick the bucket"
- "Spill the beans"

Idiom: A common expression understood figuratively, as the literal definition makes no sense. The meaning of these expressions is different from the literal meaning or definition of the words of which they are made. Their meanings are however used figuratively. They mean respectively:

- "to die "
- "Disclose a secret "

Idioms do not convey the exact meaning of the words but are an expression of a hidden meaning.

Business Idioms: Problems

In Hot Water
In need of help; in trouble



Head (Go) South
Decline, get worse



(An) Uphill Climb
A difficult process



Above Water

- **Meaning:** Not in extreme difficulty. Especially said of finances.
- **Example:** *We're not rich, but we're keeping our heads **above water**.*

Come Out in the Wash

- **Meaning:** To be resolved with no lasting negative effect
- **Example:** *Right now it seems as though you have a lot of problems, but don't worry – it will all **come out in the wash**.*

Note: This is used most often in the construction "it will all come out in the wash."

Cut Corners

- **Meaning:** Economize by reducing quality; take shortcuts
- **Example:** *Let's not cut corners on the roofing materials – with the rainstorms around here, we'd regret it later.*

(The) Last Straw

- **Meaning:** A problem or insult that finally demands a response
- **Example:** *It's always annoying when Rudy brings food to his office, but today he brought a durian. That's the last straw – I'm going to complain to the boss.*

Body Part Idioms

- Cross your fingers – For good luck.
- Fell on deaf ears – People wouldn't listen to something.
- Get cold feet – Be nervous.
- Giving the cold shoulder – Ignore someone.
- Have a change of heart – Changed your mind.
- I'm all ears – You have my full attention.
- It cost an arm and a leg – It was expensive.

Everyday Idioms

- A grey area – Something unclear
- A rip-off – Too expensive
- Add fuel to the fire – To add more to an existing problem
- As easy as ABC – Something is very easy
- Call it a day – Time to quit
- Cool as a cucumber – To be very calm under stress
- Draw a blank – Can't remember
- Get a kick out of it – Really enjoy/like something
- Get your act together – Behave properly
- Give it a shot – To try to do something
- Have mixed feelings – Be unsure of how you feel
- Have second thoughts – Have doubts
- In the same boat – Be in the same situation
- It's in the bag – It's a certainty
- Out of the blue – With no warning
- Pass with flying colors – To succeed at something easily
- Piece of cake – Something very easy
- Read between the lines – Find the hidden meaning
- Second to none – The best
- The icing on the cake – Something additional that turns good into great

Animal Idioms

- A bull in a china shop - Someone who is very clumsy
- Birdbrain - Someone who is not very smart
- Busy as a bee - To be very active and working hard at something
- Cat got your tongue? - Why aren't you talking?
- Cry crocodile tears - To pretend to be upset
- Curiosity killed the cat - Asking too many questions may get you in trouble
- Different kettle of fish - Something completely different
- Doggy bag - A bag to take home leftovers from a restaurant
- Fish out of water - Being somewhere you don't belong
- Get off your high horse - Quit thinking you are better than others
- Hold your horses - Wait a minute
- Horse of a different color - Something that is quite different, a separate issue
- Let the cat out of the bag - Tell a secret
- Make a mountain out of a molehill - Make something unimportant into a big deal
- Night owl - Someone who stays up late
- Stir a hornet's nest - To cause a lot of trouble
- When pigs fly - To say something is impossible
- Wolf in sheep's clothing - A person who pretends to be nice but is not
- You can't teach an old dog new tricks - It's harder for older people to learn new things

EXERCISE 1

- At one's wit's end
(a) Perplexed (b) Clear Up (c) Explain (d) Enlighten
- At one's fingertips
(a) To take revenge (b) Matter of shame (c) Complete knowledge (d) None of these
- At the spur of the moment
(a) Difficult Moment (b) Without Delay (c) Great Moment (d) Very Slow
- All in all
(a) Every person (b) Particular thing same in all
(c) Call all at once (d) Most important
- Apple Pie Order
(a) In random order (b) Related to fruits packing
(c) Related to dry fruit packing (d) In perfect order
- At close quarters
(a) close examinations (b) live near to each other (c) live far to each other (d) in love
- Above board
(a) boasting person (b) honest and straightforward
(c) a man with arrogance (d) a dishonest person

8. As fit as a fiddle
(a) Very weak (b) Recovering from illness
(c) Looks fit but not fit actually (d) None of these
9. At logger heads
(a) In difficulty (b) to be at strife (c) very happy together (d) None of these
10. An apple of discord
(a) cause of wealth (b) cause of illness (c) cause of happiness (d) cause of quarrel
11. At a loss
(a) at a business loss (b) at a relation loss (c) to be unable to decide (d) None of these
12. At dagger's drawn
(a) to have bitter enmity (b) to be very friendly (c) to be unknown (d) to be very familiar
13. Bone of contention
(a) Point of an argument (b) Worthless (c) Without any hesitation (d) To succeed
14. Talk through one's hat
(a) Talk good points (b) To talk secretly (c) Talk positively (d) Talk nonsense
15. Bite the bullet
(a) To get someone drunk (b) Talking nonsense
(c) Fight with others (d) Face unpleasant situation
16. Hand over fist
(a) Get panic (b) State of high alert
(c) Quickly and continuously (d) Get comfortable
17. Black Sheep
(a) A costly item (b) A dark shiny object
(c) An unworthy person in a family or group (d) A funny man
18. Spill the beans
(a) Arrive just on time (b) Feel sick
(c) To screw up (d) Reveal someone's secret
19. To fly off the handle
(a) To be confused (b) Making friendship
(c) Punish someone (d) To lose one's temper
20. Make a name for oneself
(a) To gain fame (b) To disturb others
(c) To help others (d) Escape from trouble

EXERCISE 2

Out of four alternatives given for idioms/phrases underlined in the following sentences, choose one which expresses the meaning of the idiom/phrase.

1. A fair weather friend always tries to fish in troubled waters of his friends and benefactors.
(a) To borrow money (b) To steal belongings of
(c) To get benefit in bad situation. (d) To extend a helping hand.

2. His arrogant behavior with others has left him **high and dry**.
(a) To be penniless (b) To be very sick (c) To be very famous (d) Isolated
3. All the residents of the colony **painted the town red** on the eve of festival.
(a) To white wash buildings (b) To renovate buildings
(c) To celebrate noisily in public places (d) To create nuisances
4. The chairman **pulled a long face** when the house did not accept the suggestions put forth by him.
(a) To look disappointed (b) To get annoyed
(c) To be agitated (d) To make a quarrel
5. The **fair and square** policy of the chairman of the committee has made him very popular among the residents of the town.
(a) Clever and Deceitful (b) Honest
(c) Ambiguous (d) Relevant and practical
6. Due his bad habit of borrowing money from others, he will **be in the mire** one day.
(a) to be punished (b) To be imprisoned (c) To be insulted (d) to be in trouble
7. I do not like his habit of **mincing matters**.
(a) Not to speak plainly (b) To brag about (c) To be talkative (d) To show off
8. The chairman of the corporation **plays a second fiddle** to the minister.
(a) To extend a helping hand (b) To play a secondary role
(c) To be guiding person (d) To be facilitator
9. In order to become a successful administrator in the office, an executive has **to keep his ears to the ground**.
(a) To be very polite (b) To encourage backbiting
(c) To keep informed about happening in surrounding (d) To have a strict control over all
10. He had **to go through the motion** of starting with this new project as he was least interested to take up it.
(a) To complete quickly (b) To do a work without enthusiasm
(c) To do without any interest (d) To work at a slow speed

☞ ANALOGIES

You will find word analogies, or verbal analogies, used in standardized tests and sometimes in job interviews where you must show the relationship between two objects or concepts using logic and reasoning. These analogies are set up in a standard format. For example:

Tree : Leaf :: Flower : Petal

This analogy is read aloud as:

Tree is to leaf as flower is to petal.

This analogy highlights the relationship between the whole (a tree and a flower) and its parts (a leaf and a petal). On tests of logic, one portion of the analogy is left blank and students are left to choose an answer that makes sense to complete the comparison. For example:

Dog : Puppy :: Cat : _____

To solve the analogy, you must first determine the relationship between dog and puppy. Once you realize that a puppy is a baby dog, you can find the corresponding relationship for a cat. A baby cat is a kitten, so the completed analogy is

Dog : Puppy :: Cat : Kitten

Though there is no limit to the possibilities when it comes to word analogies, here are some examples to familiarize yourself with the concept:

- hammer : nail :: comb : hair
- white : black :: up : down
- mansion : shack :: yacht : dinghy
- short : light :: long : heavy
- bees : hive :: bears : den
- speak : sing :: walk : dance
- chef : food :: sculptor : stone
- like : love :: dislike : hate

EXERCISE

Directions for Q1 to Q5: A good way to figure out the relationship in a given question is to make up a sentence that describes the relationship between the first two words. Then, try to use the same sentence to find out which of the answer choices completes the same relationship with the third word.

- Odometer : Mileage :: Compass : _____
(a) Speed (b) Hiking (c) Needle (d) Direction
- Cup : Coffee :: Bowl : _____
(a) Dish (b) Soup (c) Spoon (d) Food
- Reptile : Lizard :: Flower : _____
(a) Petal (b) Stem (c) Daisy (d) Alligator
- Careful : Cautious :: Boastful : _____
(a) Arrogant (b) Humble (c) Joyful (d) Suspicious
- Exercise : Gym :: Eating : _____
(a) Food (b) Dieting (c) Fitness (d) Restaurant

Directions for Q6 to Q11: The words in the bottom row are related in the same way as the words in the top row. For each item, find the word that completes the bottom row of words.

- Candle Lamp Floodlight
Hut Cottage ?
(a) Tent (b) City (c) Dwelling (d) House
- Apples Fruit Supermarket
Novel Book ?
(a) Bookstore (b) Magazine (c) Vegetable (d) Shopping
- Tadpole Frog Amphibian
Lamb Sheep ?
(a) Animal (b) Wool (c) Farm (d) Mammal
- Walk Skip Run
Toss Pitch ?
(a) Swerve (b) Hurl (c) Jump (d) Dance

- | | | | |
|-----|-------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 10. | Meal | Banquet | Feast |
| | Shelter | Palace | ? |
| | (a) Mansion | (b) Hallway | (c) Protection (d) Haven |
| 11. | Fence | Wall | Boundary |
| | Path | Alley | ? |
| | (a) Ramp | (b) Passageway | (c) Airfield (d) Pedestrian |

Directions for Q12 to Q16: Every one of the following questions consists of a related pair of words, followed by five pairs of words. Choose the pair that best represents a similar relationship to the one expressed in the original pair of words.

12. Binding : Book :: _____ : _____
 (a) Criminal : Gang (b) Display : Museum (c) Artist : Carpenter
 (d) Nail : Hammer (e) Frame : Picture
13. Petal : Flower :: _____ : _____
 (a) Salt : Pepper (b) Tire : Bicycle (c) Base : Ball
 (d) Sandals : Shoes (e) Puppy : Dog
14. Rain : Drizzle :: _____ : _____
 (a) Swim : Dive (b) Hop : Shuffle (c) Juggle : Bounce
 (d) Walk : Run (e) Run : Jog
15. Fish : Shoal :: _____ : _____
 (a) Wolf : Pack (b) Elephant : Jungle (c) Beagle : Clan
 (d) Herd : Peacock (e) Cow : Farm
16. Waitress : Restaurant :: _____ : _____
 (a) Doctor : Diagnosis (b) Actor : Role (c) Driver : Truck
 (d) Teacher : School (e) Author : Book

Directions for Q17 to Q23: Choose the pair that best represents a similar relationship to the one expressed in the original pair of words.

17. Cobbler : Shoe :: _____ : _____
 (a) Jockey : Horse (b) Contractor : Building (c) Mason : Stone
 (d) Cowboy : Boot (e) Potter : Paint
18. Dominance : Hegemony :: _____ : _____
 (a) Romance : Sympathy (b) Furtherance : Melancholy
 (c) Independence : Autonomy (d) Tolerance : Philanthropy
 (e) Recompense : Hilarity
19. Sound : Cacophony :: _____ : _____
 (a) Taste : Style (b) Touch : Massage (c) Smell : Stench
 (d) Sight : Panorama (e) Speech : Oration
20. Deltoid : Muscle :: _____ : _____
 (a) Radius : Bone (b) Brain : Nerve (c) Tissue : Organ
 (d) Blood : Vein (e) Scalpel : Incision

21. Jaundice : Liver :: _____ : _____
 (a) Rash : Skin (b) Dialysis : Kidney (c) Smog : Lung
 (d) Valentine : Heart (e) Imagination : Brain
22. Conviction : Incarceration :: _____ : _____
 (a) Reduction : Diminution (b) Induction : Amelioration
 (c) Radicalization : Estimation (d) Marginalization : Intimidation
 (e) Proliferation : Alliteration
23. Dependable : Capricious :: _____ : _____
 (a) Fallible : Cantankerous (b) Erasable : Obtuse (c) Malleable : Limpid
 (d) Capable : Inept (e) Incurable : Guilty

☞ SENTENCE COMPLETION

1. WORD FITTING

Before You Look At The Answer-Choices, Think Of A Word That "Fits" The Sentence.

Example:

Crestfallen by having done poorly on the GRE, Susan began to question her abilities. Her self-confidence was _____.

- (a) appeared (b) destroyed (c) placated (d) elevated (e) sustained

If somebody is crestfallen (despairing) and has begun to question herself, then her self-confidence would be destroyed. Hence, the **answer is (b)**.

2. TRANSITIONAL WORDS

Be alert to transitional words. Transitional words tell you what is coming up. They indicate that the author is now going to draw a contrast with something stated previously, or support something stated previously.

I. CONTRAST INDICATORS

To contrast two things is to point out how they differ. In this type of sentence completion questions, we look for a word that has the opposite meaning (an antonym) of some key word or phrase in the sentence.

Following are some of the most common contrast indicators:

But

Yet

Despite

Although

However

Nevertheless

Example:

Although the warring parties had settled a number of disputes, past experience made them to express optimism that the talks would be a success.

- (a) rash (b) ambivalent (c) scornful (d) overjoyed (e) reticent

Although" sets up a contrast between what has occurred--success on some issues--and what can be expected to occur--success for the whole talks. Hence, the parties are reluctant to express optimism. The common word "reluctant" is not offered as an answer-choice, but a synonym--*reticent*--is. The **answer is (e)**.

II. SUPPORT INDICATORS

Supporting words support or further explain what has already been said. These words often introduce synonyms for words elsewhere in the sentence.

Following are some common supporting words:

And

Also

Furthermore

Likewise

In Addition

For

Example:

Davis is an opprobrious and speaker, equally caustic towards friend or foe--a true curmudgeon.

- (a) lofty (b) vituperative (c) unstinting (d) retiring (e) laudatory

"And" in the sentence indicates that the missing adjective is similar in meaning to "opprobrious," which is very negative. Now, vituperative--*the only negative word*--means "abusive." Hence, **the answer is (b)**.

III. CAUSE AND EFFECT INDICATORS

These words indicate that one thing causes another to occur.

Some of the most common cause and effect indicators are

Because

For

Thus

Hence

Therefore

If, Then.

Example:

Because the House has the votes to override a presidential veto, the President has no choice but to

- (a) object (b) abdicate (c) abstain (d) capitulate (e) compromise

Since the House has the votes to pass the bill or motion, the President would be wise to compromise and make the best of the situation. **The answer is (e)**.

3. APPPOSITION

This rather advanced grammatical structure is very common on the GRE. (Don't confuse "apposition" with "opposition": they have opposite meanings.)

Words or phrases in apposition are placed next to each other, and the second word or phrase defines, clarifies, or gives evidence to the first word or phrase.

The second word or phrase will be set off from the first by a comma, semicolon, hyphen, or parentheses.

Note: If a comma is not followed by a linking word--*such as and, for, yet*--then the following phrase is probably appositional.

Identifying an appositional structure, can greatly simplify a sentence completion problem since the appositional word, phrase, or clause will define the missing word.

Example:

His novels are ; he uses a long circumlocution when a direct coupling of a simple subject and verb would be best.

- (a) prolix (b) pedestrian (c) succinct (d) vapid (e) risqué

The sentence has no linking words (such as because, although, etc.). Hence, the phrase following the semicolon is in apposition to the missing word--it defines or further clarifies the missing word. Now, writing filled with circumlocutions is aptly described as prolix. **The answer is (a).**

4. PUNCTUATION

Whenever the punctuation "," (comma) appears, followed by a blank in between two sentences, then it means that the synonym of the phrase/word before "," is the meaning of the blank. In simple words, when you find ',' followed by a blank then find the synonym of the word before ',' and check the options to match the synonym of the word.

In the same way, when you find ":" (colon) or ";" (semi-colon) in the sentence, they will indicate that the idea coming up is merely an explanation of the earlier idea. So, simply find the synonym of the word/phrase before the punctuation and fill in the blank with the synonym from the options given.

5. POSITIVE/NEGATIVE FLOW

When you read the sentence, you have to look out for **adjectives/adverbs** which tell you the idea of the sentence. After finding these adjectives/adverbs, you need to find out if the idea of the sentence is positive/negative. All the negative ideas may be a "bad word/bad phrase" or any term which has no/none/not... in it.

You need to just go on marking the words with +/- and keep on doing till the end of the sentence. Then you need to use the punctuations/conjunctions clue which would break the sentence into 2/3 parts. After that you need to compare the +/- signs on both sides and enter the desired sign in the blank. 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:

Because he did not want to appear _____, the junior executive refused to dispute the board's decision, in spite of his belief that the decision would impair employee morale.

- (a) contentious (b) indecisive (c) solicitous (d) overzealous (e) steadfast

(c) and (e) are gone because they're positive words. (b) doesn't work because the clue is "refused to dispute." That doesn't work with indecisive. For the same reason, (d) doesn't work either. So the **best answer is option (a).**

6. PROCESS OF ELIMINATION (POE)

You can easily eliminate all the options that are definitely wrong or are eliminated through the positive/negative flow. Suppose if you have a blank in the sentence for which the answer is positive, then you can eliminate all the options which are negative. In this way you can eliminate options and have very less options remaining. The probability of you getting right answer from 2 options is much higher than you getting right from 5 options.

EXERCISE

1. Athens is remembered by historians as a peaceful society known for its philosophers and scientists, while its neighbor, Sparta, is remembered for its ____ people and focus.
(a) chivalrous (b) contentious (c) controversial (d) inflammatory (e) martial
2. The storm ____ our efforts to hold a company picnic in the park last weekend, because it was impossible to stay outdoors in such a ____.
(a) destroyed, squalor (b) bolstered, torrent (c) thwarted, downpour
(d) increased ... monsoon (e) ruined ... tragedy
3. The two rich cousins were very similar to each other in their ____ lifestyles: both spent money freely and ostentatiously displayed the ____ of their homes to their less wealthy neighbors.
(a) lavish ... opulence (b) frugal ... misery (c) stingy ... sumptuousness
(d) austere ... grandeur (e) luxurious ... deficiency
4. Tim was such a worthless and lazy contributor to the group that his inclusion in it served as ____, rather than an advantage, to the group's progress.
(a) a hindrance (b) a positive (c) an onus (d) a cancer (e) a boon
5. Many critics worry that technological devices are becoming ____ too soon these days; they contend that humans are becoming too obsessed with progress and that the proliferation of outdated and outmoded technology underscores this obsession.
(a) empowered (b) electronic (c) obsolete (d) updated (e) reconfigured
6. Far from being harmful as was thought to be the case, running on bare feet is ____ at worst and beneficial at best.
(a) innocuous (b) detrimental (c) profitable (d) ambivalent (e) injurious
7. Nearly every ancient culture had a myth involving a trickster character, a ____ individual who creates devilry either through cunningness or foolishness.
(a) mischievous (b) venerable (c) stoic (d) portly (e) stern
8. The hall of fame committee was nearly unanimous in ____ the star athlete; only one voter ____ and did not support the athlete's induction.
(a) dismissing ... saluted (b) praising ... duped (c) lauding ... dissented
(d) reprimanding ... abstained (e) ruing ... refrained
9. The repair shop attempted to ____ the damaged automobile but ultimately decided it was irreparable.
(a) sabotage (b) sap (c) salvage (d) retain (e) economize
10. Ludwig van Beethoven was a musical ____, playing his first professional concert at only seven years old.
(a) hack (b) phenomenon (c) spectacle (d) fluke (e) prodigy
11. Stephen's parents encourage him to pursue a ____ career in medicine or law; they want to see him become rich and successful.
(a) stressful (b) worthwhile (c) rewarding (d) lucrative (e) prestigious
12. Although Dina is ____ about the governor's reelection campaign, Carla regards it with ____.
(a) passionate ... indifference (b) reckless ... callousness
(c) upset ... carelessness (d) exuberant ... enthusiasm
(e) exceptional ... zeal

13. Students who are interested in foreign languages are encouraged to ____ their studies by adding courses in linguistics to their schedules.
 (a) accelerate (b) condense (c) supplement (d) prolong (e) duplicate
14. The novelist had ____ manner that could irk anyone; after all, no one likes ____.
 (a) a meek ... a genius (b) a pompous ... an egotist
 (c) a standoffish ... a bore (d) an arrogant ... an optimist
 (e) an assertive ... a braggart
15. Known for her patience and kindness, Nurse Steele is one of the most ____ employees in the entire hospital.
 (a) boorish (b) benign (c) genial (d) irritable (e) contrary
16. Many Horatio Alger stories feature ____ young man who is able to achieve the American Dream because of his own hard work and merit.
 (a) a fortunate (b) an insolent (c) a ruthless (d) a diligent (e) a negligent
17. Six months of chemotherapy and radiation have left my cancer-stricken aunt looking unhealthy and ____.
 (a) gaunt (b) brawny (c) vigorous (d) svelte (e) trim
18. Though Peter did not appear to be particularly ____, he was easily the ____ player on the team.
 (a) brawny ... strongest (b) athletic ... frailest (c) husky ... bravest
 (d) delicate ... densest (e) intelligent ... fastest
19. In order to ____ discussion about the novel, the teacher asked his students a series of questions about its themes.
 (a) advocate (b) hasten (c) aggravate (d) facilitate (e) perplex
20. Though the attorney did not directly state that the witness was a liar, the jury was able to ____ that the witness was not ____.
 (a) understand ... valuable (b) imagine ... scandalous (c) infer ... trustworthy
 (d) deduce ... likeable (e) impose ... honest
21. The helicopter ____ over the scene of the accident and lingered at a low altitude.
 (a) soared (b) hovered (c) excelled (d) collided (e) stormed
22. Jacob's mother and father both had to ____ him from his sleep because he had slept through his alarm.
 (a) fluctuate (b) deliver (c) lull (d) tremble (e) rouse
23. In an effort to make sure that no one found the evidence of his crime, Dean attempted to ____ it from investigators.
 (a) condemn (b) consecrate (c) conceal (d) convict (e) contemplate
24. The bombing of Pearl Harbor was ____ act of hostility, and the United States reacted to the blatant act with a declaration of war on Japan.
 (a) a clandestine (b) an overt (c) an inconspicuous (d) an ambiguous (e) a petty
25. Allen Ginsberg's poetry offers ____ insight into the counterculture of the 1950s; his writings give readers a deep understanding of the Beat movement.
 (a) profound (b) scholarly (c) cryptic (d) superficial (e) shallow