

## Guessing through Context Clues

### A. Verbs:

1. One effective way to **alleviate** back pain is to exercise regularly.
2. Some people **decry** space missions in that the money can be spent to help poor countries.
3. After **imploring** top officials for years to improve conditions for orphans, she was fired in June 1993.
4. The manager is trying to **imbue** its members with a firm sense of self-worth and purpose.
5. The first time he saw his future wife he was **mesmerized** by her beauty.

### B. Nouns:

6. "You can't be better than everyone else, but you can always be better than yourself," is an **aphorism** worth remembering.
7. In the past, comets were feared **harbingers** of important historical events, including invasions and major disasters.
8. He was brought up in **penury**, without education.
9. Even though there had been no actual controversy, the manager had enough **perspicuity** to realize that his employers were dissatisfied.
10. He had been a **recluse**, completely isolated from the world, for the last ten years.  
a. fool                                      b. monarch                                      c. hermit

### C. Adjectives:

11. Mahatma Gandhi was an **abstemious** person who lived chiefly on goat milk.
12. The court will require clear, **cogent** evidence before its decision can be changed.
13. Politicians tend to repeat the same **hackneyed** expressions over and over again.
14. Although many people have asked the king to forgive his prisoner, he has remained **obdurate** in his refusal to lessen his punishment.
15. The ship's captain was a **taciturn** man who spoke only to give orders.

## Round-up Exercise

**For each of Questions 1-4, select ONE entry for each blank from the corresponding column of choices.**

1. This dexterous poet was able to extract fresh effects from language and give new life to the most ----- phrases.  
A. taciturn      B. obdurate      C. abstemious      **D. hackneyed**      E. cogent
2. The first manned Gemini flight, Gemini 3, was completed by astronauts Virgil Grissom and John Young on March 23; it was a/an ----- of an exceptionally good year in space.  
A. penury      **B. harbinger**      C. perspicuity      D. aphorism      E. sequence
3. His poor (i) ----- led to the young boy's making unwise financial decisions, which soon resulted in bankruptcy, one of whose consequences was his once wealthy family having to live a/an (ii) ----- life.

**Blank (i)**

- A. harbinger  
B. recluse  
**C. perspicuity**

**Blank ii**

- D. abstemious**  
E. taciturn  
F. obdurate

4. The old was so abstemious in the matter of food, that I thought at first that he was a recluse. He was inclined to be (i) ----- and it took me some time to discover that he lived in abject penury. I was also surprised to discover that he seemed to have a deep knowledge of many subjects. On the few occasions on which he chose to talk to me freely, I was amazed at his (ii) ----- in explaining his point of view in some of these matters. His conversation was replete with original (iii) ----- and his astute comments on international affairs showed the keenness of his intellect.

**Blank (i)**

- A. taciturn**  
B. cogent  
C. hackneyed

**Blank ii**

- D. penury  
**E. perspicuity**  
F. command

**Blank iii**

- G. hermits  
H. deeds  
**I. aphorisms**

**For each of Questions 5- 6, select the TWO answer choices that when used to complete the sentence blank, fit the meaning of the sentence as a whole and produce completed sentences that are alike in meaning.**

5. Spalding Gray had a reputation for his stage monologues, and director Jonathan Demme pinpointed the essence of Gray's ability to ----- an audience with his witty anecdotes in *Swimming to Cambodia*, the performer's monologue about his Asian exploits.  
A. imbue      **B. fascinate**      C. lessen      D. fill      E. relieve      **F. mesmerize**
6. During the troubles of 1750, the ----- of Scotland was terrible; many Scots could afford nothing to eat but oatmeal porridge.  
A. harbinger      B. hermit      C. omen      **D. penury**      E. recluse      **F. destitution**

