



Sentence Completion



What is Sentence Completion?

There are questions in Verbal Ability section of placement papers that require the students to fill in the gaps with appropriate words. This is referred to as Sentence Completion.



Question 1

The Sentence Completion questions check _____

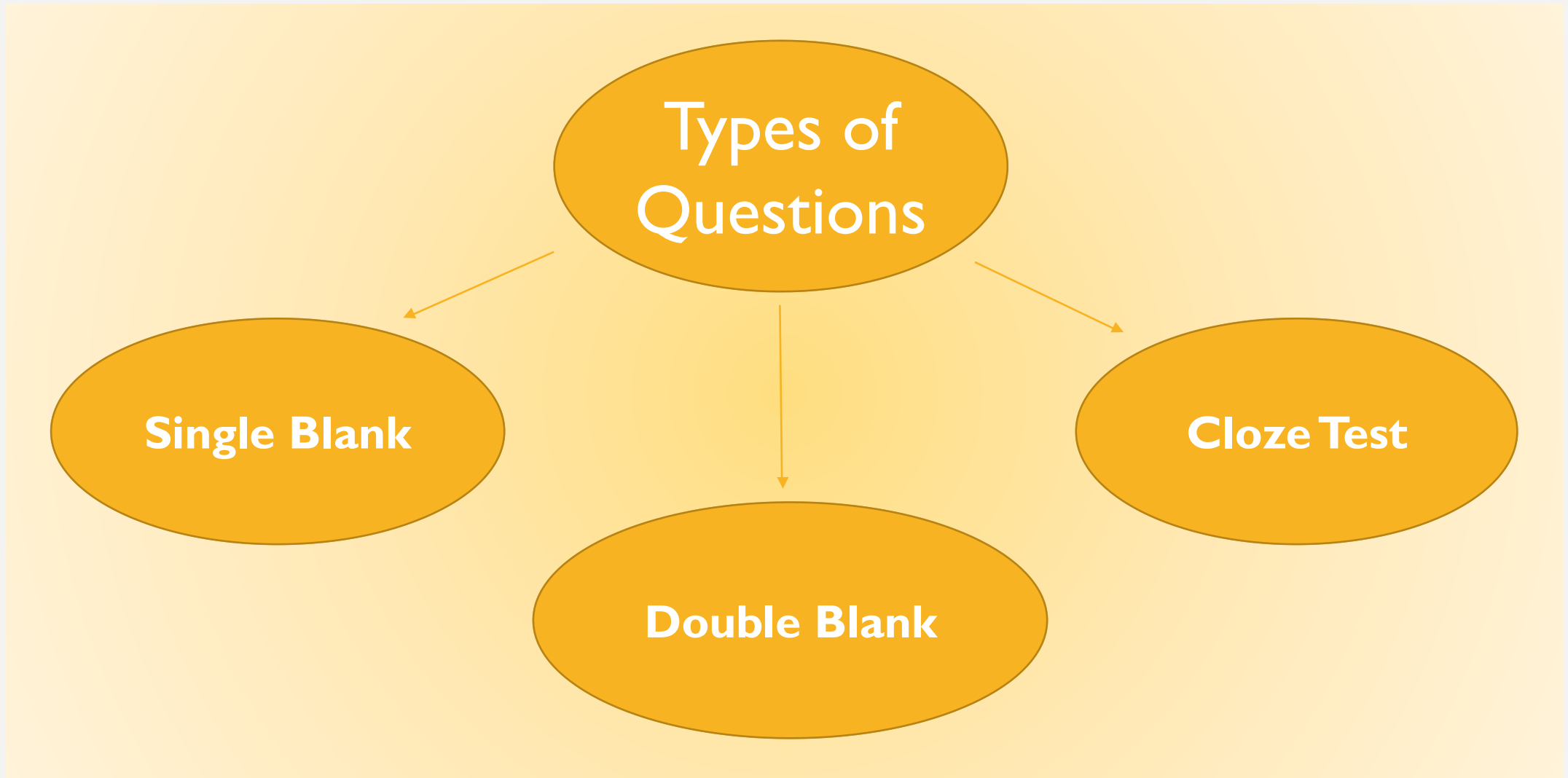
- a) understanding of vocabulary
- b) understanding of logical structure of sentence
- c) both a & b
- d) neither a nor b



Question 1

The Sentence Completion questions check _____

- a) understanding of vocabulary
- b) understanding of logical structure of sentence
- c) **both a & b**
- d) neither a nor b





Single Blank Question

The one-blank Sentence Completions are solved in two steps:

- Step 1: define the blank. Use context clues in the sentence to figure out what kind of word will go in the blank.
- Step 2: match the answer. Look down the list of answer choices and pick the one that best matches your word for the blank. Then be sure to read the answer choice back into the sentence to be sure it makes sense.



Example

'Thanks to her sunny demeanor and ----- attitude, Gertrude was always a welcome guest.'

- (A) Fatigued
- (B) Redundant
- (C) Ambitious
- (D) Contradictory
- (E) Light-hearted

In this sentence, we're looking for a word that has something to do with being cheerful. Fatigued means 'tired,' which doesn't fit. Redundant means 'saying the same thing twice,' which also doesn't work. Ambitious means 'striving for success,' which is positive, but doesn't match the clue 'sunny demeanor', and contradictory also doesn't fit. Light-hearted means 'happy' or 'cheerful.' If you read it back into the sentence, it fits. So, the correct answer is (E).



Question 2

A child should not be _____ as being either very shy or overaggressive.

- A. categorized
- B. instructed
- C. intoned
- D. distracted
- E. refrained



Question 2

A child should not be _____ as being either very shy or overaggressive.

- A. **categorized**
- B. instructed
- C. intoned
- D. distracted
- E. refrained



Double Blank Question

The double blank questions are worked out in two steps:

- Step 1: define the blanks. Use context clues in the sentence to figure out what the words in the blanks will mean.
- Step 2: match your answer. Pick the answer that provides the word you need for both blanks.

With two-blanks, you get two chances to eliminate each answer. Remember that both words have to match; if even one is wrong, you can confidently eliminate the whole answer without even knowing the other.

This makes two-blank sentence completions a lot more forgiving if your vocabulary isn't quite where you'd like it to be.



Example

'Despite his reputation for ----- and carelessness in his academic work, Alexander was always very ----- when working on his personal projects.'

- (A) Intransigence...punctual
- (B) Contrition...tactful
- (C) Negligence...meticulous
- (D) Haste...hapless
- (E) Penury...conscientious

Let's go through the answers one by one. In choice (A), intransigence means 'stubbornness.' It doesn't fit with the idea of carelessness or laziness, so you can cross off (A) right away. Moving on to (B), contrition means 'being sorry about something.' That also doesn't work with carelessness, so (B) is out. In choice (C), negligence is 'carelessness' - think of the same root word in 'neglect.' And meticulous means that you 'pay attention to the details,' which seems to fit with the second word as well. So, this one may fit. In choice (D), haste might work for the first blank, but hapless doesn't fit the second blank at all; it means 'unlucky,' which has nothing to do with being careful. Again, if it's half wrong, it's all wrong, so get rid of it. In (E), penury lets you eliminate the answer right away; this means 'poverty,' which doesn't fit the clue. So (C) is the only answer choice left. Read it back into the sentence to double-check



Question 3

President Anwar el - Sadat of Egypt, disregarding _____ criticism in the Arab world and in his own Government, _____ accepted prime minister Menahem Begin's invitation to visit Israel in order to address the Israeli parliament.

- A. acrimonious - formally
- B. blemished - stiffly
- C. categorical - previously
- D. malignant - plaintively
- E. charismatic - meticulously



Question 3

President Anwar el - Sadat of Egypt, disregarding _____ criticism in the Arab world and in his own Government, _____ accepted prime minister Menahem Begin's invitation to visit Israel in order to address the Israeli parliament.

- A. **acrimonious - formally**
- B. blemished - stiffly
- C. categorical - previously
- D. malignant - plaintively
- E. charismatic - meticulously



Cloze Test Questions

A Cloze test is an exercise where the candidate is provided with a paragraph. The paragraph has missing words or blanks which have to be filled by the candidate from the options given.

- Use contextual clues to determine missing words
- Check the sentence flow



Question 4

Petroleum, or crude oil, is one of the world's (1) ----- natural resources. Plastics, synthetic fibres, and (2) ----- chemicals are produced from petroleum. It is also used to make lubricants and waxes. (3) ----- , its most important use is as a fuel for heating, for (4) -- --- electricity, and (5) ----- for powering vehicles.

1. A. as important/ B. most important/ C. so importantly/ D. less importantly/ E. too important
2. A. much/ B. a lot/ C. plenty/ D. many/ E. less
3. A. Therefore/ B. However/ C. Moreover/ D. Hence/ E. Rather
4. A. generated/ B. to generate/ C. being generated/ D. generate/ E. generating
5. A. decisively/ B. exclusively/ C. especially/ D. favourably/ E. notably



Question 4

Petroleum, or crude oil, is one of the world's (1) ----- natural resources. Plastics, synthetic fibres, and (2) ----- chemicals are produced from petroleum. It is also used to make lubricants and waxes. (3) ----- , its most important use is as a fuel for heating, for (4) -- --- electricity, and (5) ----- for powering vehicles.

1. A. as important/ **B. most important**/ C. so importantly/ D. less importantly/ E. too important
2. A. much/ B. a lot/ C. plenty/ **D. many**/ E. less
3. A. Therefore/ **B. However**/ C. Moreover/ D. Hence/ E. Rather
4. A. generated/ B. to generate/ C. being generated/ D. generate/ **E. generating**
5. A. decisively/ B. exclusively/ **C. especially**/ D. favourably/ E. notably



What makes the hard questions hard?

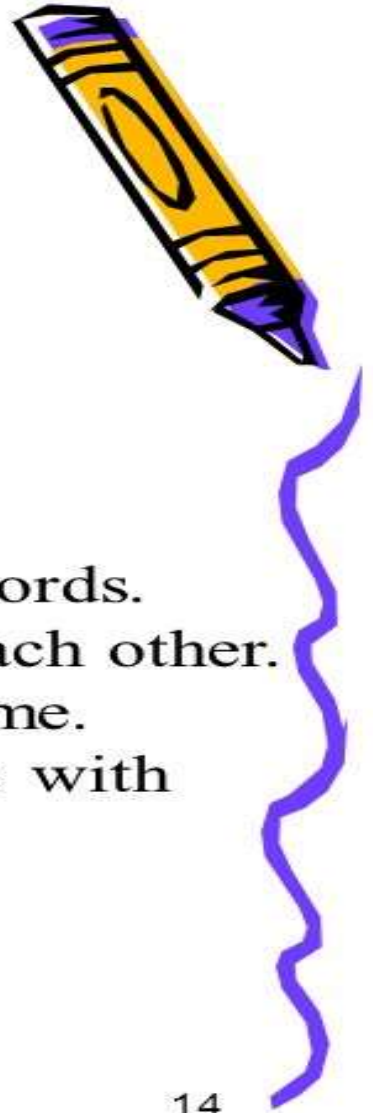
1. **Vocabulary Level:** Sentences contain words like intransigence, nonplussed, harbingers. Answer choices include words like penchant, abeyance, and eclectic.
2. **Grammatical Complexity.** Sentences combine the entire range of grammatical possibilities adverbial clauses, relative clauses, prepositional phrases, gerunds, infinitives, and so on in convoluted ways. The more complex the sentence, the more difficult it is for you to spot the key words that can unlock its meaning.
3. **Tone.** Sentences reflect the writer's attitude towards the subject matter. It is simple to comprehend material that is presented neutrally. It is far more difficult to comprehend material that is ironic, condescending, playful, sombre, or otherwise complex in tone.
4. **Style.** Ideas may be expressed in different manners ornately or sparely, poetically or prosaically, formally or informally, journalistically or academically, originally or imitatively. An author's style depends on such details as word choice, imagery, repetition, rhythm, sentence structure and length.



Strategies for Sentence Completion

Tips for answering sentence completions:

- Read the sentence, substituting the word “blank” for each blank.
- Watch for the key introductory and transitional words. These determine how the parts of the sentences relate to each other.
- Answer the two-blank questions one blank at a time.
- Check your answer by reading the entire sentence with your selected words in the blanks.





Sentence Completion Question

Skills

Tips

Scanning Specific information
in the passage

Selecting appropriate words

Understanding information in
the passage

Identify the type of word needed for each
gap (noun/verb/adjective)

Locate the information in the passage in
order to choose the right word

Check how many words can be used for
each answer

The sentence must be grammatically
correct which help you in choosing the
right word for the gap

Answers usually come in order



Question 5

When approaching a sentence completion sentence, look for signal words to get an idea about the sentence

- a) True**
- b) False**



Question 5

When approaching a sentence completion sentence, look for signal words to get an idea about the sentence

a) True

b) False



Question 6

When solving sentence completion questions, which punctuation marks help in solving the questions?

- a) Comma**
- b) Semicolon**
- c) Colon**
- d) All of the above**
- e) None of the above**



Question 6

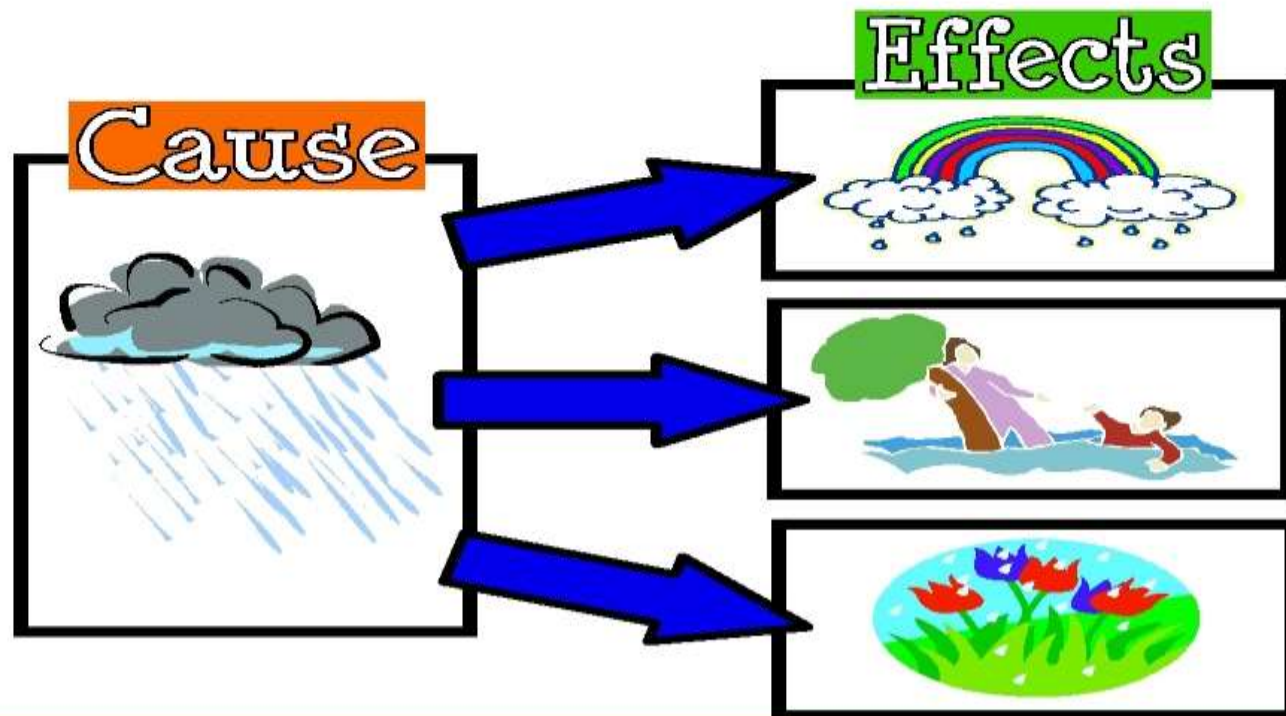
When solving sentence completion questions, which punctuation marks help in solving the questions?

- a) Comma
- b) Semicolon
- c) Colon
- d) All of the above**
- e) None of the above

Text Structure

Cause and Effect

Shows relationship between **cause** (event) and **effect** (what happened because of the event)



Signal Words

consequently
therefore
as a result
reason why
because of
may be due to



Example sentence completion with **cause/ effect** words

- Margot studied veraciously for the SAT and as a result, her score was shown to have been _____.
- A. improved B. dissatisfying C. strenuous
D. obscure E. ephemeral



Words that are
used to COMPARE:

also
as well as
alike
both
just like
in common
similar to

Words that are used
to CONTRAST:

although
but
differs from
different
however
in contrast
on the other hand
than



Example sentence completion with **contrast** words

- In sharp contrast to the previous night's revelry, the wedding was _____ affair.
A. a fervent B. a dignified
C. A chaotic D. an ingenious
E. a jubilant



Humans too, like all (i) _____ creatures who bond together, such as the crows and bees, have their (ii) _____. Sometimes the petty differences end up fatally.

(i)

enthusiastic

gregarious

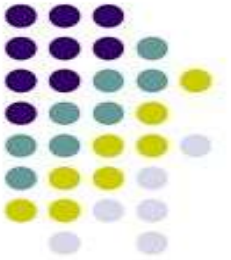
warm-blooded

(ii)

criticisms

quibbles

prejudices



Restatement Context Clues

Restatement context clues are close to synonym. Restatement differs in that difficult word is usually restated in a simpler form—usually set off by commas.

Example:

- ❖ **The poetry was sublime, lofty and moving, and brought tears to my eyes.**
- ❖ *In this sentence the words “lofty and moving” and “brought tears to my eyes” tells us that sublime means inspiring.*

Transitional Words & Phrases

Addition	Argument	Cause and Effect
As well	Best of all	As a result
Besides	Especially	Because
Equally Important	In fact	Consequently
In addition	Most importantly	For that reason
In other words	Obviously	Since
Likewise	Of course	Therefore
Moreover	Understandably	
Similarly	Worst of all	
Contrast	Illustration	Space
But	Finally	Across
Despite	For example	Below
However	For instance	Behind
In contrast	Namely	Between
On the contrary	Specifically	In front
On the other hand	Such as	Near
Nevertheless	That is	Next to
Nonetheless	To illustrate	Opposite
Summary	Time	
Accordingly	Finally	After
In conclusion	First	At last
In other words	Following	Before
In short/brief	Immediately	Beginning with
Thus	Initially	Currently
	Last	During
	Meanwhile	Earlier
	Next	Eventually



LET'S RECAP





4 STEPS TO SUCCESS: STEP 1

Step 1: Read the sentence for **CLUE WORDS**:

- BUT, ALTHOUGH, EXCEPT, EVEN THOUGH, DESPITE, HOWEVER etc (expect a contrast in the next part of the sentence)
- AND, MOREOVER, ADDITIONALLY, FURTHERMORE, SUCH AS (expect a continuation of the same idea)

Example: The king's _____ decisions as a diplomat and administrator **led to** his legendary reputation as a **just** and _____ ruler. **(continuation)**

Example: The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1940s quickly _____ the popular imagination, **but** the precise significance of the scrolls is still _____ by scholars. **(contrast)**



4 STEPS TO SUCCESS: STEP 2

Step 2: Predict the answer

Memorizing vocabulary by categorizations of simple words will help you with the strategy. Try to guess the general idea of what word makes sense in the sentence BEFORE looking at the answers. Think about whether you need a pair of synonyms or antonyms if there are two blanks.

Example:

The king's good/smart decisions as a diplomat and administrator ~~led to~~ his legendary reputation as a ~~just~~ and fair ruler. ~~(continuation)~~

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1940s quickly interested the popular imagination, ~~but~~ the precise significance of the scrolls is still unknown by scholars. ~~(contrast)~~



4 STEPS TO SUCCESS: STEP 3

STEP 3: CHOOSE THE BEST OPTION

Compare your prediction to each answer. Read every choice before deciding.

Example 1:

The king's _____ decisions as a diplomat and administrator **led to** his legendary reputation as a **just** and _____ ruler. **(continuation)**

- A. quick...capricious
- B. equitable...wise
- C. immoral...perceptive
- D. generous...witty
- E. clever...uneducated



EXAMPLE 1 ANSWER EXPLANATION

You should be looking for two words with similar meaning, both positive.

- In A. *quick* and *capricious* are not necessarily positive, and they are not similar in meaning (*capricious* means erratic)
- In B. *equitable* means fair. *Equitable* and *wise* are similar, and they're both positive, so B. seems like the right answer, but make sure to check out the other answers first.
- In C. *immoral* and *perceptive* are not similar at all; moreover, *perceptive* is positive, but *immoral* is not.
- In D. *generous* and *witty* are both positive, but they are not very similar, and they don't make sense in the sentence.
- In E., *clever* and *uneducated* aren't similar, and *clever* is positive, but *uneducated* isn't.
- Thus, **B is the best match.**



4 STEPS TO SUCCESS: STEP 3

Example 2:

- The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1940s quickly _____ the popular imagination, **but** the precise significance of the scrolls is still _____ by scholars. (**contrast**)

- A. impressed...understood
- B. alarmed...obscured
- C. troubled...perceived
- D. sparked...disputed
- E. eluded...debated



EXAMPLE 2 ANSWER EXPLANATION

- The word *but* indicates contrast, and the first is positive and the second is negative (in that exact order).
- In A. *impressed* could be the answer, but *understood* is not a contrast.
- In B. both *alarmed* and *obscured* are negative
- In C. *troubled* is negative, so that's out.
- In D. makes the most sense with the word *interested* and *imagination*. The contrast of *disputed* (they haven't come to an agreement), indicates that this is the perfect answer. So this is the best choice. But still read answer E.
- In E. *eluded* and *debated* are not opposite in meaning.



4 STEPS TO SUCCESS: STEP 4

- **PUT THE ANSWER CHOICE BACK INTO THE SENTENCE.**
 - Read the sentence aloud to yourself with your answer choice. If you've gone through the four steps and more than one choice still looks possible, eliminate the choices that you can, guess from the remaining choices and move on.
 - If all the choices look great or terrible, circle question and come back to it later or leave it blank entirely. Remember that you will be penalized $\frac{1}{4}$ of a point for answering incorrectly, so guess intelligently! If you can narrow it down to two answers, then go ahead and guess.

Few Strategies

- break the sentence down into the main clause and introductory clause or phrase in order to identify the relationship it expresses.



Example

In a hospital setting, hand washing is primarily a _____ measure.

- A) prophylactic
- B) pseudocytic
- C) protensive
- D) propaedeutic
- E) otiose

SOLUTION

The main clause declares that hand washing is primarily a measure. However, preceding the declaration is a condition or constraint expressed in an introductory phrase, “a hospital setting.” This phrase sets the contextual field within which the main clause is to be understood. If you generalize from your knowledge, it would seem that any measure promoted in a hospital should result in good health. Only one of the answers would result in this. That is answer (A) in which *prophylactic* means “prevents disease.”

Few Strategies

- attend to sets, whether a set of synonyms or antonyms or special word groups.



Example

Even when a _____ mother was made available to the infant chimpanzee, the infant detected the _____ and reacted with high anxiety.

- A) hedonistic...contrivance
- B) vagrant...apostasy
- C) veteran...ruse
- D) pretender...interference
- E) surrogate...substitution

SOLUTION

Nothing in a common sense association supports the pairing of hedonistic and contrivance, vagrant and *apostasy*, veteran and *ruse*, or *pretender* and *interference*. The only set of related words is *surrogate* (meaning substitute) and *substitution* in (E), the correct answer.

Few Strategies

- Pay attention to the words that control the figurative field of the sentence.

Example

In seventeenth-century France, private and public opinion portrayed the physician as a vulture of greed, circling the sick and dying, battenning off the suffering of the afflicted, and _____ the remains of his prey.

- A) spending
- B) devouring
- C) retreating from
- D) decrying
- E) resorbing

SOLUTION

Clearly the correct answer is (B), devouring. The key words that control the figurative field are *vulture*, *circling*, and *battenning*. Read the items carefully and make sure that the completed sentence is meaningful, that it makes sense. Sometimes two or three choices will seem to satisfy the necessity for meaning-based completions, but only one will ever complete the sentence meaningfully.



KEY TAKEAWAYS





- Read the entire sentence before trying to pick any answers!
- Before reading the answer choices, consider what word(s) you would put in the blank(s) and use that as a guide to assess answer choices.
- Consider word valence—whether a positive or negative word belongs in a given blank.
- Identify signal words and phrases—primarily transitions—that help indicate the overall structure of ideas in the sentence/mini-passage.
- Whenever you guess, eliminate as many wrong answers as you can first.
- Once you've chosen words for multi-blank questions, read through the entire passage with your word choices to make sure the entire thing makes sense all together.
- Remember that every text completion question is worth the same amount of points! So don't get overly bogged down on multi-blank questions when there are still simpler ones to complete.



Let's practice



PRACTICE 1

The path to _____ is a path of hardship.

- a. Workmanship
- b. Successful
- c. Illumination
- d. Enlightenment



PRACTICE 1

The path to _____ is a path of hardship.

- a. Workmanship
- b. Successful
- c. **Illumination**
- d. Enlightenment



PRACTICE 2

You seem to have _____ done this. There is no way the vase could have otherwise fallen from here.

- a. Architecturally
- b. Décor-wise
- c. Deliberately



PRACTICE 2

You seem to have _____ done this. There is no way the vase could have otherwise fallen from here.

- a. Architecturally
- b. Décor-wise
- c. Deliberately



PRACTICE 3

The sign-post is so _____. If only the ones who erected it had some literary sense!

- a. Shakespearian
- b. Poetic
- c. Ambiguous
- d. Ambivalence



PRACTICE 3

The sign-post is so _____. If only the ones who erected it had some literary sense!

- a. Shakespearian
- b. Poetic
- c. Ambiguous**
- d. Ambivalence



PRACTICE 4

Jackson's performance was _____. People even fainted.

- a. Overcrowding
- b. Overwhelming
- c. Outstanding



PRACTICE 4

Jackson's performance was _____. People even fainted.

- a. Overcrowding
- b. Overwhelming**
- c. Outstanding



PRACTICE 5

I kept feeling guilty that I had disturbed him. But contrary to my fear, I found that he was _____ !

- a. Unfazed
- b. Innocent
- c. Overwhelmed
- d. Imprisoned



PRACTICE 5

I kept feeling guilty that I had disturbed him. But contrary to my fear, I found that he was _____ !

- a. Unfazed**
- b. Innocent
- c. Overwhelmed
- d. Imprisoned



PRACTICE 6

He is a silent social worker; and prefers to hide his _____ tendencies from shrewd colleagues at work.

- a. Societal
- b. Philatelist
- c. Philanthropist
- d. Partying



PRACTICE 6

He is a silent social worker; and prefers to hide his _____ tendencies from shrewd colleagues at work.

- a. Societal
- b. Philatelist
- c. Philanthropist**
- d. Partying



PRACTICE 7

She likes to work in _____ projects. We knew she was versatile.

- a. Multi-utility
- b. Vivacious
- c. Multi-disciplinary
- d. Stylish



PRACTICE 7

She likes to work in _____ projects. We knew she was versatile.

a. Multi-utility

b. Vivacious

c. Multi-disciplinary

d. Stylish



PRACTICE 8

Sarita has been talking to me since morning. Not only do I find her attitudinal change _____, I even find it somewhat _____.

- a. Surprising, intriguing
- b. Interesting, boring
- c. Shocking, surprising



PRACTICE 8

Sarita has been talking to me since morning. Not only do I find her attitudinal change _____, I even find it somewhat _____.

a. Surprising, intriguing

b. Interesting, boring

c. Shocking, surprising



PRACTICE 9

The Shimla trip was fantastic. Not only did the tour bring me a _____, but it almost sent me into _____ world.

- a. Freshening, mundane
- b. Holiday, international
- c. Enjoyment, another
- d. Change, another



PRACTICE 9

The Shimla trip was fantastic. Not only did the tour bring me a _____, but it almost sent me into _____ world.

- a. Freshening, mundane
- b. Holiday, international
- c. Enjoyment, another
- d. Change, another**



PRACTICE 10

Your noise, children, is not just _____; it is an absolute _____.

- a. Sweet, honey-like
- b. Sweet, sugar-cube
- c. Commotion, chaos
- d. Commodity, chaotic



PRACTICE 10

Your noise, children, is not just _____; it is an absolute _____.

- a. Sweet, honey-like
- b. Sweet, sugar-cube
- c. Commotion, chaos**
- d. Commodity, chaotic

