**WORD IN CONTEXT QUESTIONS SAT**

When you are attempting to discover the meanings of words, look for context clues, such as:

Definition (Some older churches contain feretories, shrines used to house relics of saints.) Example (There are some members of the lily family that we eat every day,—for example, garlic.)

Comparison (An oriel is like a large bay window with attitude.) Contrast (Unlike the silk flowers in the hall, origami is made of paper.)

Restatement (She realized that her new boss was irascible. In other words, the boss had a quick temper.)

Synonym (He sent in troops to quash, or subdue, the rioting crowd.)

Detail (Frontogenesis occurred over central Texas last night. Cold air from the north collided with warm Gulf air to produce thunderstorms.)

Remember, context clues can lead to the identity of any word you may see in an online article, a book you may be reading, or instructional materials you see in your classroom. The bulleted items mentioned above will be your tools (clues) to do just that!

Try to practice by observing interesting words you may see throughout your busy day that you are not sure the meaning of. Then look for the context clues to help! This is a good exercise for this type of SAT question. It also helps to build your vocabulary.

**PRACTICE**

1. This text is from Anne Fadiman, Ex Libris: Confessions of a Common Reader, copyright © 1998 by Anne Fadiman.

I call the “to each his own” quandary the His’er Problem, after a solution originally proposed by Chicago school superintendent Ella Young in 1912: “To each his’er own.” I’m sorry. I just can’t. My reactionary self has aesthetic as well as grammatical standards, and his’er is hideous. Unlike Ms., his’er could never become reflexive. (I might interject here that when I posed the His’er Problem to my brother, who was raised in the same grammatical hothouse as I, he surprised me by saying, “I won’t say his’er. That would be a capitulation to barbarism. But I would be willing to consider a more rhythmically acceptable neologism such as hyr or hes, which would be preferable to having to avoid his by plotting each sentence in advance like a military campaign.”)

As used in the text, what does the word “neologism” most nearly mean?

(A) New word

(B) Contraction

(C) Pronoun

(D) Correct word

2. The following text is from the beginning of short stories by F. Scott Fitzgerald in Flappers and Philosophers, originally published in 1920.

There he paused for a moment until his eyes became accustomed to the sun, and then seeing the girl under the awning he uttered a long even grunt of disapproval. If he had intended thereby to obtain a rise of any sort he was doomed to disappointment. The girl calmly turned over two pages, turned back one, raised the lemon mechanically to tasting distance, and then very faintly but quite unmistakably yawned.

As used in the text, what does the word “rise” most nearly mean?

(A) Increase

(B) Greeting

(C) Reaction

(D) Wave

3. This passage is from Paul Fussell, “Hiroshima: A Soldier’s View,” copyright © 1981 by The New Republic.

I’ve already noted what “a few more days” would mean to the luckless troops and sailors on the spot, and as to being thoughtful when “opening up the age of nuclear warfare,” of course no one was focusing on anything as portentous as that, which reflects a historian’s tidy hindsight. The U.S. government was engaged not in that sort of momentous thing but in ending the war conclusively, as well as irrationally remembering Pearl Harbor with a vengeance.

As used in the text, what does the word “tidy” most nearly mean?

(A) Clean

(B) Orderly

(C) Substantial

(D) Satisfactory

4. This passage also is from Paul Fussell, “Hiroshima: A Soldier’s View,” copyright © 1981 by The New Republic.

Understanding the past requires pretending that you don’t know the present. It requires feeling its own pressure on your pulses without any ex post facto\* illumination. That’s a harder thing to do than Joravsky seems to think.

As used in the text, what does the word “illumination” most nearly mean?

(A) Exaggeration

(B) Intellectual enlightenment

(C) Pretension to knowledge

(D) Spiritual enlightenment

5. This passage is from Irving Kristol, Reflections of a Neoconservative, copyright © 1983 by Irving Kristol. A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ society, a society whose civilization is shaped by market transactions, is always likely to reflect the appetites and preferences of common men and women. Each may not have much money, but there are so many of them that their tastes are decisive.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

(A) socialistic

(B) commercial

(C) philosophic

(D) philanthropic

6. This passage is from Milton Friend, “Why Bother About Wildlife Disease?” from U.S. Geological Survey Circular 1401, 2014.

Some emerging zoonoses cause major economic impacts for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because of their presence in food production species such as poultry (H5N1) and swine (Nipah virus). For example, the highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza virus that appeared in Asia during 1997 and reached 51 countries by early 2010 caused billions of dollars in losses for the poultry industries of those countries.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

(A) horticulture

(B) forestry

(C) hydroponics

(D) agriculture

7. The following passage is from Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, translated from French into English by Henry Reeve and originally published in 1835. Alexis de Tocqueville was a French writer and visitor to the United States.

When I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to obey an unjust law, I do not contest the right of the majority to command, but I simply appeal from the sovereignty of the people to the sovereignty of mankind.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

(A) demand

(B) acquiesce

(C) refuse

(D) assent

8. The following passage is from “Sustainability and Renewable Resources” by Steven Hayward, Ph.D., Elizabeth Fowler, and Laura Steadman, copyright © 2000 by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, Midland, Michigan.

Renewable resources are subject to a variety of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, often more powerful than those acting on non-renewables. They are inexhaustible in the sense that they can be continually recycled, but this does not mean they are infinite in amount and does not prevent their degradation.

Which word choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

(A) stresses

(B) conditioned responses

(C) protections

(D) refuges

9. The following passage is from OECD/Nuclear Energy Agency (2000), “Nuclear Energy in a Sustainable Development Perspective,” www.oecd-nea.org/sd. Many instances of unsustainable resource use can be attributed not only to a lack of a well-functioning market, but to perverse institutional or legal incentives, such as a lack of property rights to resources, or (especially in underdeveloped nations) a lack of ready resource alternatives.

As used in the text, what does the word “perverse” most nearly mean?

(A) Convoluted

(B) Corrupt

(C) Caused by selfishness

(D) Arising from obstinate persistence in an error

10. This passage is from Freeman Dyson, Disturbing the Universe, copyright © 1979 by Freeman J. Dyson. If a scientist asserts that the stars at these immense distances have a decisive effect on the possibility of human existence, he will be suspected of being a believer in astrology. But it happens to be true that we could not have survived if the average distance between stars were only two million million miles instead of twenty.

As used in the text, what does the word “decisive” most nearly mean?

(A) Resolute

(B) Important

(C) Extreme

(D) Conclusive