

THE BEST ACT PREP COURSE EVER

DICTION

ACT English: Problem Set

1. Smoldering through the vintage shop's collection of old photographs, we mistook the tintype portraits for daguerreotypes. However, daguerreotypes are distinguished by silver-plated sheets and glass-enclosed ornamental cases.
- A. NO CHANGE
B. Managing
C. Pillaging
D. Rummaging
2. Three waterfalls make up the Niagara Falls: the Horseshoe Falls, the American Falls, and the Bridal Veil Falls. Altogether, the three falls have a mixed flow rate ranked the highest of any waterfall in the world with a vertical drop greater than 165 feet.
- A. NO CHANGE
B. combined
C. united
D. teamed
3. In the four days we camped near Big Sur, we saw sea lions, visited Hearst Castle, and even drove past wild zebras. By far, hiking down the path towards Pfeiffer Beach and breathing the ocean air was the most exemplified experience for me.
- Which choice best conveys the idea that Chelsea thoroughly enjoyed her visit to Pfeiffer Beach?
- A. NO CHANGE
B. traumatic
C. exhilarating
D. elevated
4. Located in northwestern Utah, the Bonneville Salt flats are named after Benjamin Bonneville. Geologist Grove Karl Gilbert named them after Bonneville for his exploration of the Intermountain West during the 1830s. The salt flats, also known as salt pans, are compressed packed depressions in the ground where saltwater evaporates and leaves deposits of salt. Nowadays, the area is open to the public and visitors can see these salt flats for themselves.
- A. NO CHANGE
B. hardly
C. loose
D. densely
5. To make the perfect éclair one has to form a proper choux pastry dough, which can be insured by having a high moisture environment that creates steam to puff the pastry during baking.
- A. NO CHANGE
B. ensured
C. confirming
D. assure
6. On a trip to Alaska last winter, Shelby was incredibly prosperous to have seen the Aurora Borealis, or the Northern Lights. It happened to be a dark night with very clear skies, so the display shone bright enough for her and a few other lucky people to see.
- A. NO CHANGE
B. successful
C. charming
D. fortunate
7. Elizabeth Bishop's "One Art," one of her most noticed poems and often featured in anthologies, was actually part of the last book of poetry published in her lifetime.
- Given that all the choices are true, which one best sets up the image of "One Art" as one of Bishop's famous poems?
- A. well-known
B. informed
C. acknowledged
D. obvious
8. Navigating the New York subway system was a long learning experience for me. I kept a map that highlighted different subway lines in various colors, which was the most helpful way for me to keep track of the stations. Using my finger to trace along the lines, I could imagine the station I was leaving from and the stop I wanted to go to. Thus, this was a more efficient way to learn the system visually without getting lost too many times.
- Which choice best maintains the style and tone of the paragraph?
- A. picture
B. envisage
C. forecast
D. dream of

9. Two of Alfred Hitchcock's most recognizable films are Psycho and Vertigo, both of which share a common theme of suspense. In fact, Hitchcock is noted for his psychological thrillers, earning him the title "Master of Suspense."
- A. purported
 - B. famed
 - C. reput
 - D. distinct
10. Among the publications subjugated over by Hearst Magazines are Marie Claire, Bazaar, Cosmopolitan, and Esquire.
- A. NO CHANGE
 - B. curbed
 - C. managed
 - D. charged

ANSWER KEY

1. D 2. B 3. C 4. D 5. B 6. D 7. A 8. A 9. B 10. C

ANSWER EXPLANATIONS

1. **D.** “Rummaging” is more appropriate than “smoldering” because to rummage means to randomly search through a mass of objects, while to smolder means to burn without flames or to show barely suppressed anger. We don’t typically “manage through.” Pillaging means to ransack and steal, but no breaking of laws is implied here.
2. **B.** “Combined” is more appropriate than “mixed” in this sentence because the three waterfalls have a total, or combined, flow rate ranked highly. “Mixed” creates an unclear meaning: what does it mean for a rate to be mixed? United and teamed are similarly non-idiomatic in such a literal example; both indicate a sense of unity in spirit or attitude, a connotation inappropriate for waterways.
3. **C.** The adjective closest to “exciting” that shows Chelsea thoroughly enjoyed her visit is “exhilarating,” which means something that is thrilling, or something that makes one extremely happy. “Traumatic” implies that the experience was negative, and we have no context clues to indicate this is appropriate. The tone is positive. “Exemplified” means to make an example of while “elevated” means set ahead or higher. Both words create unclear meanings.
4. **D.** The word that conveys something is tightly packed or “squeezed” is “densely.” The adverb “densely” means closely compacted or crowded together, and functions to describe the adjective “packed.” “Compressed” means the same thing as “packed” but creates a double adjective, where we need an adverb and then an adjective. (C) loose is also an adjective so does not work grammatically. “Hardly” does not make sense in context.
5. **B.** “Ensure” is commonly confused with “insure.” To ensure means to make certain that something results in a specific outcome, while to insure means to arrange for compensation in case of damage or loss of property in exchange for advance payments. (C) and (D) fail to use the correct verb form (the sentence calls for a past participle form) with the helping verb “be.”
6. **D.** “Prosperous” is not the appropriate word for this sentence because this word means being successful financially or in material terms; nor does “successful” make sense—to have success implies that someone contributed necessary skill or effort to an endeavor, and such contributions don’t apply in this situation. Shelby was “fortunate” to have seen the Northern Lights, or she was lucky to have seen the elusive display on a clear night. Charming is unrelated, and deals with social attractiveness.
7. **A.** The word closest to “noticed” that also sets up the image of fame is “well-known.” When something is well-known it is known widely or thoroughly. Though a poem could be acknowledged, “well-known” carries more of a connotation of fame. Obvious is a synonym of noticeable, but in context its meaning is unclear.
8. **A.** This paragraph is a narrative and more informal in tone because it is in the first person. Thus, the choice that best maintains the style is “picture,” which means to form a mental image of something. (B) is too formal, (C) is too scientific, and (D) is oddly idealistic and romantic in tone.
9. **B.** The word closest to “noted” is “famed.” Hitchcock was famed, or known about by many, for his psychological thrillers that he was even deemed the “Master of Suspense” for his works. “Purported” means to be supposed or to suppose, and the word is awkward here. Reputed would work, but “repute” is in the wrong form (noun or verb) whereas the context calls for an adjective or participle form. To be “distinct” or “unique” for something sounds awkward.
10. **C.** “Subjugated over” is not appropriate for this sentence because it means bringing something under domination or control, usually in the context of conquest. The more appropriate word is “managed,” which means that Hearst Magazines is in charge of the publications. Choose the most normal sounding word— don’t make things too fancy!