

*resolute*

*Determined* and *resolute* are a pair. *Hapless*, *unsuccessful*, and *unlucky* seem to be a “triplet.” (*Talkative* is not related to the others.)

However, *hapless* really does mean *unlucky* (“*hap*” is actually a rarely used Old English word for “luck” or “lot”). A person can be unsuccessful without being unlucky. *Hapless* and *unlucky* are the true pair.

It is also possible to have just one pair, or three.

Only one pair:

- pale
- flexible
- hidden
- celebrated
- equitable
- fair

*Equitable* and *fair* are a pair. The other four words are unrelated.

Three pairs:

- candid
- latent

ingenuous

inimical

dormant

hostile

*Candid* and *ingenuous* are a pair. *Latent* and *dormant* are a pair. *Inimical* and *hostile* are a pair.

While all of these answer choice patterns are possible, the most common by far is the “two by two.”

## ***When to Use Answer Choice Analysis***

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To use Answer Choice Analysis as your main tool for Sentence Equivalence questions, you can actually proceed to the choices first, before even reading the sentence. For instance:

Blah  
\_\_\_\_\_ , blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah.

myrmidons

aesthetes

tyros

- lackeys
- anchorites
- novices

Go straight to the words and attempt to make pairs: *myrmidons* and *lackeys* are subordinates who follow without question. *Tyros* and *novices* are both beginners. An *aesthete* loves or studies beauty, and an *anchorite* is a recluse, especially a religious hermit, and thus those two words are not related.

Therefore, the answer must be *myrmidons/lackeys* or *tyros/novices*. The only question you need to ask is, “Does the sentence call for a ‘suck-up’ or a ‘beginner?’” Here is the complete problem:

It may be true that everyone likes flattery, but a good manager is not unduly persuaded by it, and thus not taken in by \_\_\_\_\_, who use wheedling and fawning to get ahead.

- myrmidons
- aesthetes
- tyros
- lackeys

anchorites

novices

Of course, the question is calling for **myrmidons** and **lackeys**.

This approach can be very effective in cases where you know all of the words in the choices. However, since most test-takers don't have strong enough vocabularies to be able to complete the Answer Choice Analysis consistently, Sentence Analysis will probably be a first line of attack for many people, and Answer Choice Analysis a backup plan.

## *Drill: Answer Choice Analysis*

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For each set of choices, match up the “pairs.” Most, but not all, sets of choices consist of two pairs of near-synonyms and two other, unrelated words. A few will have one or three sets of near-synonyms.

1. verbose

turbid

diffident

prolix

self-effacing

pious

2. amicable

pithy

scholarly

arcane

succinct

esoteric

3. distend

traduce

alienate

flatter

slander

complement

4. auxiliary

cardinal

principal

ordinal

collateral

prefatory

5. hawkish

cogent

turgid

eloquent

bombastic

intelligible

6. pellucid

transparent

rustic

sedulous

assiduous

earthy

7. eclecticism

aberrance

deviation

idiosyncrasy

adulation

eccentricity

8. bevy  
modicum  
paucity  
excess  
surfeit  
bunch

9. machicolation  
epitome  
scruple  
apothegm  
contumely  
maxim

10. pique  
slake  
quench  
succor  
fructify  
stimulate

### ***Answers: Answer Choice Analysis***

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1. 2 pairs: **Verbose** and **prolix** are a pair, each meaning “talkative.” **Diffident** (lacking confidence) and **self-effacing** (putting oneself down) are a pair; they are not perfect synonyms, but they are close enough for Sentence Equivalence questions on the GRE. *Pious* and *turbid* have no relationship.

2. 2 pairs: **Pithy** and **succinct** both mean “short and to the point.” **Arcane** and **esoteric** both mean “obscure or specialized, known to only a few” (of information). *Amicable* and *scholarly* are not related.

3. 1 pair: **Traduce** and **slander** are a pair, meaning “tell malicious lies about.” **Complement** and **flatter** are a TRAP—*complement* (to complete, to make up a whole with) is NOT the same word as *compliment* (to say something nice about). *Distend* and *alienate* are also unrelated.

4. 2 pairs: **Auxiliary** and **collateral** mean “secondary, off to the side.” **Cardinal** and **principal** (first, main) are actually synonyms with each other and antonyms with auxiliary and collateral. *Ordinal* and *prefatory* are not related.

5. 2 pairs: **Turgid** and **bombastic** are a pair. *Bombastic* means “pompous, overinflated” and is used to describe speech. While *turgid* can simply mean “swollen,” when it is applied to speech, it has the same meaning of “overinflated, showing off.” **Eloquent** and **cogent** are a weak pair—*eloquent* means beautiful and articulate (of speech), and *cogent* means compellingly persuasive. *Intelligible* and *hawkish* are not related.

6. 3 pairs: **Pellucid** and **transparent** are a pair (see-through), as are **rustic** and **earthy** (primitive, of the earth, undeveloped), and **assiduous** and **sedulous** (hardworking).

7. 2 pairs: **Aberrance** and **deviation** are a pair (being different from the normal). *Eclecticism*, *idiosyncrasy* and *eccentricity* may all seem similar. However, **idiosyncrasy** and **eccentricity** (harmless personal oddness) are a true pair. *Eclecticism* (having mixed, wide-ranging tastes) is somewhat different, and is also unrelated to

*adulation.*

8. 2 or 3 pairs: **Bevity** and **bunch** are a pair, as are **surfeit** and **excess**. **Modicum** and **paucity** are questionable as a pair because they differ in spin—*modicum* means a little, and *paucity* means not enough.

9. 1 pair: **Apothegm** and **maxim** are a pair (proverb, pithy statement). *Machicolation*, *epitome*, *scruple*, and *contumely* are unrelated.

10. 2 pairs: **Pique** and **stimulate** are a pair. **Slake** and **quench** (satisfy, especially of thirst) are a pair. *Succor* (provide comfort or relief) might seem related the second pair, but one *succors* a person, and one *slakes* or *quenches* a desire. *Fructify* is unrelated.

## ***What If I Don't Know the Words?***

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It almost seems as though this new question type on the GRE was designed to prevent lucky guesses. On a typical multiple-choice question with choices A–E, a test-taker has a 1/5 chance of randomly guessing the correct answer. On a Sentence Equivalence, a random guess of two out of the six answers has only a 1/15 chance of being correct.

If you know *one* of the correct choices and randomly guess on the other, your chance of getting the question correct is 1/5.

Thus, it is very important that you assiduously augment your vocabulary, which is

why so much of this book is dedicated to learning words.

That said, a little answer choice analysis can be helpful in making a good guess.

Most Sentence Equivalence questions match the “two-by-two” format; that is, the answer choices contain two pairs of near-synonyms and two other “loose” words. Thus, if you can find a single pair of synonyms in the choices, there is about a 1/2 chance that that pair is correct (it is only “about” one-half, since not all sets of choices follow a “two-by-two” format). Here is an example:

- agog
- akimbo
- obeisant
- dyspeptic
- kowtowing
- crotchety

If you were able to pick out that *dyspeptic* and *crotchety* were a pair—or that *obeisant* and *kowtowing* were—then you should test that pair in the sentence and pick it if it seems to be a good match. (As will be the case in most questions, the two remaining words, *agog* and *akimbo*, have no relationship.)

If the pair that you are able to find is not a fit for the sentence, cross off both words. You now have a 1/6 chance of guessing correctly.

If you cannot find a synonym pair, you are unlikely to get the question correct. Accept that fact and don't waste time. Your strategy here is simply to make a guess and move on, conserving time for questions that you will be able to answer later.

Although the new GRE allows you to move around within a section and come back to questions you previously left blank or wish to reconsider, keep in mind that, **if you don't know the words, you won't do any better by attempting the question twice**—you'll only waste time and lower your overall score.

If you don't know the words, **do not leave the question blank**. Make your best guess and move on. Don't waste time coming back—spend that extra time on Reading Comprehension or other vocabulary questions that you are able to answer more effectively.

In sum: learn the words!

### ***Why It Is Important to Learn Words in Context***

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Educational Testing Service tells you not only to check that the two answers you select for a question create sentences that mean the same thing, but also to make sure that each one “produces a sentence that is logically, grammatically, and stylistically coherent.”

Hmm. Asking test-takers to check that the completed sentences are “grammatically coherent” implies that some of the choices will create sentences that are not. Here’s an example:

Education advocates argued that the free school lunch program was vital to creating a school environment \_\_\_\_\_ to learning.

- conducive
- inimical
- substantial
- appropriate
- beneficial
- hostile

“Education advocates” are certainly in favor of learning; your fill-in might be something like *helpful*.

Looking at the choices, *conducive*, *appropriate*, and *beneficial* all seem to be matches.

However, if you place each word into the sentence, one choice creates an incorrect idiom. “Conducive to” works, and “beneficial to,” but “appropriate to learning” is

not a correct idiom—instead, you would say “appropriate *for* learning.”

Thus, it is important not only to memorize dictionary definitions of words, but also to be able to use those words in context, in a grammatically correct way.

Here's another example:

He's a \_\_\_\_\_ fellow, always grandstanding and deploying his formidable lexicon for oratorical effect.

- declamatory
- grandiloquent
- didactic
- florid
- titanic
- cabalistic

The target is “he” and the clue is “grandstanding and deploying his formidable lexicon for oratorical effect”; that is, he speaks in a pompous way, as though showing off his vocabulary for an audience.

The word *florid* seems appropriate—it means “flowery” and often applies to speech, as in “florid poetry.” But wait! *Florid* applies to writing, speech, decor, etc.—not the people who produce those things! (Actually, you can apply *florid* to people, but in that context it means “flushed, ruddy,” as in having rosy cheeks, which is not appropriate here.)

The answer is **declamatory** and **grandiloquent**, both of which describe pompous orators (that is, people who make speeches) or the speech of such people.

Memorizing that *florid* means “flowery” is better than nothing, but doesn’t really tell you what kinds of things to describe with that word, or how to use it metaphorically. Once again, it is important to learn words in context.

There are several ways to do this. Manhattan Prep’s GRE vocabulary flashcards provide example sentences for all 1,000 words. Many online dictionaries provide quotes from literature in which the word being defined is used in context. In some cases, it is fruitful to simply Google a word to see how different writers are using it.

Whatever your process, your goal is to be able to do two things for any given word. First, to define it in a concise and straightforward way. Second, to be able to use it in a sentence in a descriptive way (such that someone reading the sentence would understand what it meant from the context).

You want to be comfortable when seeing a word used in any legitimate way. For instance, you would have no trouble if the word “darkness” were used metaphorically (“While she at first resisted going on antidepressants, she ultimately decided that she would do anything that might lift the darkness”), or if the word “enthusiastic”

were used sarcastically (“As enthusiastic as I am about unnecessary surgery, I will have to decline your offer to appear on an extreme makeover reality show”).

To perform excellently on the GRE, that's how well you want to know your new words: inside and out. You want to be *flexible* in how you use and interpret those words. The “Learning Vocabulary” chapter of this book provides more guidance for formidably augmenting your lexicon.

## *Drill: 20 Easy Questions*

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1. The children's story—seemingly a simple tale of animals gathering for a picnic in the forest—took a \_\_\_\_\_ turn at the end, admonishing readers to always be honest.
  - magnanimous
  - beneficent
  - didactic
  - garrulous
  - moralistic
  - futile
  
2. Floodwaters had already breached the library's walls, but hopeful volunteers in hip boots worked tirelessly to \_\_\_\_\_ the damage.
  - mitigate
  - exacerbate
  - abase

- bolster
  - forestall
  - flummox
3. The candidate campaigned on a platform of willingness to cooperate with the members of other political parties, yet many commentators were nevertheless surprised that he indeed turned out to be less \_\_\_\_\_ than his predecessor.
- irate
  - divisive
  - impulsive
  - wily
  - infuriated
  - combative
4. When Sven got angry, whether it was during an argument with his family or with just a coworker, it proved almost impossible to \_\_\_\_\_ him and thereby return him to his normal demeanor.

- condemn
  - pacify
  - judge
  - incense
  - mollify
  - influence
5. The graduate student's experiment yielded results as surprising as they were promising; her next step was to pursue additional data that would \_\_\_\_\_ her findings.
- undergird
  - buttress
  - gainsay
  - undermine
  - eschew
  - lecture

6. There is no fundamental difference between a person who quietly \_\_\_\_\_ a bigoted viewpoint to a friend and one who spews chauvinist vitriol on television.

eschews

espouses

professes

denies

reneges

substantiates

7. A 1957 lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture regarding aerial pesticide spraying was the \_\_\_\_\_ for Rachel Carson to begin the writing of her environmentalist manifesto *Silent Spring*, though she had become concerned about and started researching the practice years earlier.

stimulus

conspiracy

atrocity

- impetus
  - catastrophe
  - climate
8. A commentator with a more \_\_\_\_\_ worldview would not find it so easy to divide up the nation into good guys and bad guys.
- belligerent
  - subtle
  - philosophical
  - aberrant
  - peaceful
  - nuanced
9. James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*, written in a stream of consciousness style full of convoluted puns and obscure allusions, has a deserved reputation for linguistic \_\_\_\_\_ .
- caprice

- opacity
- meaninglessness
- informality
- uniqueness
- inscrutability

10. The financial situation in many European nations is \_\_\_\_\_ enough that even a small incident could lead to catastrophe.

- drab
- unstable
- illegitimate
- unsafe
- precarious
- churlish

11. While the argument for global warming may not be \_\_\_\_\_ by the record low temperatures reported this year, this data does not undermine the

overall trend of steadily higher global temperatures.

- bolstered
  - fortified
  - subverted
  - defined
  - supplanted
  - subordinated
12. The debate coach expected some gravitas from her team, arguing that pithy quips and gibes, while sometimes effective, had no place in a \_\_\_\_\_ argument.
- polite
  - shallow
  - competitive
  - serious
  - cantankerous

substantive

13. Last year it was discovered that *South Park* writers \_\_\_\_\_ part of its *Inception* spoof from a similar *College Humor* sketch.

amalgamated

filched

indulged

combined

poached

assumed

14. Some critics view Abstract Expressionism, which is characterized by geometric shapes and swathes of color, as a \_\_\_\_\_ of realist painting.

rejection

manifestation

renunciation

memento

commemoration

vindication

15. The nascent United States' first spy, Nathan Hale, was captured by the British when he attempted to \_\_\_\_\_ British-controlled New York City to track enemy troop movements.

thwart

penetrate

infiltrate

permeate

research

conquer

16. Romantic comedies of the 1950s were characterized more by sexual \_\_\_\_\_ than the straightforward vulgarity that characterizes dialogue in today's "rom-coms."

conversation

blatancy

insinuation

illusion

innuendo

rapport

17. Inflation isn't dead, only \_\_\_\_\_; as the economy turns around, the purchasing power of the dollar is likely to fall again.

paralyzed

dormant

indigent

itinerant

problematic

inactive

18. Some boxers talk about trying to access their more \_\_\_\_\_ selves in order to counter the fact that civilized people generally don't punch each other in the face.

seething

barbaric

irate

insidious

dynamic

primitive

19. Many people assume that creative work is less \_\_\_\_\_ than manual labor, but they underestimate the difficulty of being entirely self-motivated (as well as writing one's own paychecks).

inventive

collaborative

serious

arduous

taxing

grave

20. The education debate is only getting more \_\_\_\_\_ as politicians demonize teachers unions and every special interest group jumps into the fray.

- vehement
- overt
- heated
- problematic
- tired
- unavoidable

### ***Drill: 20 Medium Questions***

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1. While many individual religions insist on the primacy of their particular deity, syncretism advocates the \_\_\_\_\_ of multiple religious beliefs, attempting to reconcile even opposing principles and practices.

- exclusion
- marriage
- commingling

- division
  - transgression
  - schism
2. The ambassador was invested with \_\_\_\_\_ power by his government and hence was able to draft and finalize the agreement unilaterally, without first consulting with even the president.
- tertiary
  - consummate
  - enigmatic
  - tyrannical
  - complete
  - dictatorial
3. Sometimes it seems that today's politicians will exploit any opportunity to \_\_\_\_\_ their views to the world, no matter how sordid or partisan.
- declaim

- invoke
  - disparage
  - parrot
  - adduce
  - trumpet
4. The many chapters of the organization decided that a mandatory national \_\_\_\_\_ would be necessary to reconcile what had become a haphazard and often chaotic set of bylaws and regulations.
- introduction
  - acclamation
  - intervention
  - colloquium
  - symposium
  - mediation
5. Though it seems implausible that one could be a great writer without some

experience of life, many famous authors have led a \_\_\_\_\_ and solitary existence.

idiosyncratic

cloistered

susceptible

enigmatic

sheltered

cryptic

6. Though he wasn't particularly well-known as a humanitarian, his deep sense of responsibility for those who were suffering was real, and was belied by an outward appearance of \_\_\_\_\_ .

concern

sagacity

mirth

felicity

- nonchalance
  - indifference
7. Excessive patriotism is by definition \_\_\_\_\_, as the elevation of one country to the rank of quintessential on Earth necessarily requires some amount of demonization of other people.
- minatory
  - xenophobic
  - unethical
  - bigoted
  - nationalistic
  - truculent
8. One possible explanation for the mandatory debauchery of most bachelor parties is that if the husband-to-be is able to practice \_\_\_\_\_ in those circumstances, he must be ready for marriage.
- forbearance
  - gentility

- fiat
  - tenacity
  - temperance
  - autonomy
9. Jon Stewart's "Rally to Restore Sanity" was purportedly organized to prove that it was possible to discuss politics humorously but civilly, without \_\_\_\_\_ those on the other side of the fence.
- bespeaking
  - eulogizing
  - lampooning
  - vilifying
  - caricaturing
  - maligning
10. Though occasionally used in practice, very few forms of corporal punishment have been \_\_\_\_\_ by the military, due less to the Geneva Conventions than to the overwhelmingly negative popular response to reports of abuse.

- upbraided
- sanctioned
- endorsed
- considered
- rejected
- polarized

11. The budget debate progressed well for the first few months, in spite of all the ardent and sometimes bitter squabbling, but slowly descended into a \_\_\_\_\_ of competing interests and claims.

- quagmire
- covenant
- feud
- morass
- quarrel
- accord

12. The difference between similes and metaphors is subtle, but for the poet who takes his or her work seriously, absolutely \_\_\_\_\_.

- synoptic
- null
- optional
- crucial
- nominal
- requisite

13. It is \_\_\_\_\_ reasoning to characterize Keynesian economics as recommending that the limit on how much debt the government can incur should be perpetually raised, when Keynes states clearly that deficit spending must be done responsibly.

- indigenous
- corrupt
- venial
- fallacious

specious

axiomatic

14. In many ways, teenage rebellion can be seen as the effect of a communication gap between an older generation's calcified language and the protean \_\_\_\_\_ of the new generation.

patois

defiance

prolixity

insubordination

verbosity

jargon

15. His cantankerous reputation was cemented by years of \_\_\_\_\_ at every conceivable opportunity.

imputing

grousing

assaulting

protesting

convulsing

imbibing

16. Last St. Patrick's Day, the police were called when people in the neighborhood witnessed a small \_\_\_\_\_ in progress outside of a bar.

fracas

discourse

altercation

battle

colloquy

mutiny

17. Given her sheltered upbringing and the limited breadth of experience imposed on her by economic circumstance, her work reflected a surprisingly \_\_\_\_\_ sensibility.

- shallow
- eclectic
- profound
- multifarious
- callow
- facile

18. Many people expect documentary filmmakers to be dispassionate and objective, but Michael Moore has a reputation for never missing a chance to \_\_\_\_\_ against those with whom he disagrees.

- rail
- advertise
- fulminate
- inveigle
- strain
- aspire

19. The movie critic was best remembered for the way he used the language of food to describe films, for example, how he praised Iñarritu's action sequences by comparing them to a \_\_\_\_\_ empanada.

- insipid
- spectacular
- brilliant
- piquant
- zesty
- stupefying

20. Every few years, someone manages to survive a skydive with a parachute that doesn't open, often with only a few broken bones, some \_\_\_\_\_, and a gash or two.

- torpor
- trauma
- bruises
- finesse

lesions

contusions

### ***Drill: 20 Hard Questions***

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- As official \_\_\_\_\_ from Japan to this country, he was called upon to answer questions about the Japanese government's position on various issues.

envoy

tyro

emissary

neophyte

ascetic

libertine

- While the group's street protests had had an aggressive, uncompromising tenor, once admitted to the halls of power to begin formal lobbying, its leaders wisely chose to \_\_\_\_\_ the stridency of their rhetoric.

metamorphose

- gild
- wane
- palliate
- succor
- damp

3. The women's rights movement has been mostly \_\_\_\_\_ in the Middle East, but it is likely that activists will be newly galvanized by the political upheavals currently sweeping the region.

- dogged
- quiescent
- interminable
- lissome
- abeyant
- feckless

4. Debate rages on between proponents and detractors of corporal punishment

and the death penalty, though even the most ardent supporter agrees that punishments must be \_\_\_\_\_ and the justice system evenhanded and thorough.

equitable

clement

delimited

apposite

tantamount

merciful

5. Peer-reviewed journals are a sacred cow of most scientific rationalists, but studies have shown that the premise of impartiality is \_\_\_\_\_, as results tend to be colored by the personal proclivities and suppositions of the experimenters.

inane

prejudicial

fatuous

- chimerical
  - fallible
  - vexing
6. The description of the restaurant as a garden of \_\_\_\_\_ delights is fair enough, as Chef Marcel conjures up a menu of texture and taste that calls into question one's preconceived notions of what constitutes a meal.
- salubrious
  - epicurean
  - carnal
  - voluptuous
  - terrestrial
  - gustatory
7. Most of his books droned on and on for chapter after chapter, each one providing yet another example of his thesis, the \_\_\_\_\_ of which can be found in précis form in the tome's first few pages, and which is recapitulated from that point on.

- gist
  - adage
  - pith
  - stub
  - nimbus
  - nut
8. In order to ascertain the efficacy of the new GRE vis-à-vis the old one, it will be necessary not only to collect, but also to \_\_\_\_\_ detailed score reports from test-takers from both groups, as only by studying the differences and similarities in results can proper inferences be drawn.
- aggregate
  - ratiocinate
  - collate
  - juxtapose
  - agglomerate

glean

9. In World War I, trenches were dug so that the soldiers could avoid the near constant \_\_\_\_\_ from the other side of the line of battle, but not even a trench could protect a battalion from grenades or aerial bombardment.

volleys

provocations

fervency

imprecations

goadings

salvos

10. Cary Grant's reputation as a suave and \_\_\_\_\_ ladies man extended beyond the silver screen to his real life, where he was known to never let a woman pull out her own chair, in keeping with the custom of gentlemen at that time.

consummate

genteel

debonair

- waggish
  - courtly
  - cosmopolitan
11. Focusing primarily on self-awareness, empathy, and honest self-expression, the communication process known as “nonviolent communication” states that the attempt to find parity in a relationship is a fallacious principle, as any notion of fairness is entirely \_\_\_\_\_ .
- subjective
  - introverted
  - pragmatic
  - utilitarian
  - illicit
  - personal
12. Education has become a kind of albatross in American politics, in that a speech with any hint of \_\_\_\_\_ is actually more pernicious to a politician's reputation than one with numerous signs of ignorance, or even outright stupidity.

- bromide
- erudition
- patrimony
- condescension
- cerebrality
- bloviation

13. Laurent Cantet's *Time Out* tells the true story of a man so obsessed with retaining the \_\_\_\_\_ of plenitude even after he is discharged from his employment that he doesn't even tell his wife and his kids about his termination.

- corollaries
- paradigms
- semblance
- prepossessions
- veneer

consequences

14. What people fail to remember about Don Juan is that his astronomical number of amatory adventures were due more to his \_\_\_\_\_ approach to seduction than any surfeit of charisma or skillfulness.

sumptuous

lurid

covert

indiscriminate

blanket

sybaritic

15. Even the most far-reaching campaign finance reform proposals will fail to \_\_\_\_\_ the influence of money, which doesn't just buy speedboats and golf weekends in the Bahamas, but directly relates to a politician's capacity to run for office.

attenuate

graft

- pander
  - abate
  - importune
  - indemnify
16. In their landmark study of Victorian literature's relationship to feminism, Gilbert and Gubar \_\_\_\_\_ the many ways in which 19<sup>th</sup>-century women writers created characters that fit into archetypes of "angel" and "monster."
- interrogate
  - interpolate
  - debunk
  - limn
  - explode
  - castigate

17. While it's inarguably prejudiced to imply that there is some kind of innate \_\_\_\_\_ in certain countries, it's more reasonable to say that certain cultures are more willing to prioritize relaxation and a sense of moderation

between work and play.

- obtundity
- enfeeblement
- enervation
- languor
- seemliness
- lethargy

18. Autodidacts may argue that the enforced lucubration of a standard education is \_\_\_\_\_, but while some people are able to learn without outside guidance and strictures, most people learn better when accountable to others.

- slack
- prudent
- lax
- extraneous
- unnecessary

sagacious

19. The best of Sigur Ros's music evokes \_\_\_\_\_ landscape, as if the music had transported one to some twilit avenue in a long since abandoned city.

a dusky

an urban

a crepuscular

a precipitous

an avuncular

a civic

20. Some historians argue that at least in so far as the broad strokes are concerned, cataclysmic events such as the Great Depression are \_\_\_\_\_, due to what some have termed "the inertia of history."

ineluctable

incontrovertible

interminable

- infallible
- inexorable
- unspeakable

## *Solutions: 20 Easy Questions*

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1. **Didactic, Moralistic.** The children's story was "seemingly" simple—which means it was not actually simple. Instead, the story took some kind of "turn"—meaning that it changed in some way—and "admonished readers to always be honest." That is, it took a turn by talking about morals or prescribing correct behavior.

*Magnanimous* (generous) and *beneficent* (good, or doing good) are an incorrect pair. *Garrulous* (overly talkative, wordy) and *futile* (ineffective, useless) have no relationship.

2. **Mitigate, Forestall.** That "floodwaters had already breached the library's walls" sounds very bad—the water is already inside. The pivot "but" tells you that the sentence is going to change direction, and indeed, the volunteers are "hopeful," so you're looking for something good in the blank—although it doesn't seem like they're going to cure the problem entirely. A good fill-in would be something like "limit" or "hold back."

*Exacerbate* (make more severe, aggravate), *abase* (reduce in prestige, humiliate),

*bolster* (support, boost), and *flummox* (confuse) do not contain any pairs.

**3. Divisive, Combative.** The most important words here are the pivots “nevertheless surprised” and “indeed,” which tell you that the candidate actually stayed true to his campaign promise. That means he acted cooperatively, which is contrasted with the actions of his predecessor. A good fill-in would be “uncooperative.”

*Irate* and *infuriated*, both of which mean “angry,” are an incorrect pair. *Impulsive* (moved or swayed by emotional or involuntary urges) and *wily* (crafty or cunning) have no relationship.

**4. Pacify, Mollify.** This sentence provides the clues that when Steve “got angry,” returning him “to his normal demeanor” was “almost impossible.” His normal demeanor must be something like “not angry,” so you’re looking for something like the verb “calm” in the blank.

*Condemn* (censure; sentence), *judge* (form an opinion about), *incense* (infuriate), and *influence* (determine or guide) do not contain any pairs, though *condemn* and *judge* are close.

**5. Undergird, Buttress.** The target is both the data and the findings—the blank contains what the data will do to the findings. You have the clue that the results were promising (but surprising, indicating some uncertainty about the apparent conclusion), and you have a same-direction pivot (the semicolon). Thus, her next step would likely be to “verify” or “corroborate” the findings.

*Gainsay* (deny or prove false) and *undermine* (weaken or subvert secretly) are a

pair. *Eschew* (shun, avoid, or abstain from) and *lecture* (speak at length) are unrelated.

6. **Espouses, Professes.** This sentence originally posits that there is “no fundamental difference” between two things, but the overall point is that the two things do look different on the surface. That means you want someone who does the opposite of “spews chauvinist vitriol on television,” such as someone who quietly “expresses” it. A good fill-in would be “communicates.”

*Denies* and *reneges* (renounces or denies) are an incorrect pair. *Eschews* is also pretty close to that pair. *Substantiates* goes beyond “communicates,” meaning to support or verify, and is too positive to go with “a bigoted viewpoint.”

7. **Stimulus, Impetus.** Prior to 1957, Rachel Carson was already concerned about aerial pesticide spraying, but the lawsuit caused her to begin work on the book. A good fill-in would be “inspiration.”

*Atrocity* (extremely wicked or cruel act) and *catastrophe* (disaster) have similar spins, but they are not really a pair. *Climate* (the general weather conditions in an area over a long period), which presents a theme trap, and *conspiracy* (a secret plan by two or more people to do something unlawful) have no relationship.

8. **Subtle, Nuanced.** In this sentence, the commentator is described as finding it easy to split people into “good...and bad” categories. This is a very simplistic way of looking at the world. Someone with a more complex worldview would be unlikely to break things down so simplistically.

*Belligerent* (inclined to aggressive hostility), *philosophical* (devoted to the study of knowledge; calm about difficulties or disappointments), *aberrant* (deviating from the normal or proper course, especially in behavior, or atypical), and *peaceful* (tranquil) have no relationship.

**9. Opacity, Inscrutability.** Joyce's book is described as "stream of consciousness," with "convoluted puns and obscure allusions." The adjectives "convoluted" and "obscure" are the most important part of this sentence. They tell you that the novel is likely hard to understand. A good fill-in would be "difficulty" (specifically, of understanding).

*Elaborateness* (marked by complex detail; intricacy), *meaninglessness* (nonsense), *informality* (relaxed style), and *uniqueness* (the quality of being one of a kind) have no relationship. While *meaninglessness* might seem tempting, it's too extreme to be correct.

**10. Unstable, Precarious.** The situation in Europe is described as bad enough that even a small incident might lead to a catastrophe. This means that everything is on the brink of disaster. You could fill in the blank with something like "shaky."

*Drab* (dull, colorless, or cheerless), *illegitimate* (not authorized by the law), *unsafe* (not safe; dangerous), and *churlish* (uncivil, boorish, or vulgar) have no relationship, though all are negative.

**11. Bolstered, Fortified.** The second half of this sentence is not relevant to the blank. All you need to notice is the contrast between "warming" and "record low temperatures" as well as the pivot "while." Clearly, record low temperatures would

not help an argument about global warming. A good fill-in would be “helped.”

*Subverted* (undermined, in terms of power or authority) and *subordinated* (made inferior or subservient) are an incorrect pair. *Defined* (described exactly) and *supplanted* (replaced, substituted for) have no relationship.

12. **Serious, Substantive.** The debate coach values “gravitas” (seriousness) and argues that “quips” (witty remarks) and “gibes” (taunts) don’t belong in a certain kind of argument. “Serious” and “substantive” is the only set that works.

*Polite* could work, but it has no pair. *Shallow*, *competitive*, and *cantankerous* (disagreeable or difficult to deal with) have no relationship.

13. **Filched, Poached.** The most important word here is the adjective “similar.” If both *South Park* and *College Humor* created a similar spoof, then one of them must have “stolen” the sketch from the other.

*Amalgamated* and *combined* are an incorrect pair. *Indulged* (allowed oneself to enjoy) and *assumed* (supposed without proof) have no relationship. *Assumed* can mean “took or began to have (power or responsibility)” or even “took on or adopt (an appearance, manner, or identity), but you wouldn’t use *assume* to mean the taking any other kind of item, such as a comedy spoof.

14. **Rejection, Renunciation.** Abstract Expressionism is described as “characterized by geometric shapes and swathes of color.” Clearly this is very different from “realist painting.” A good fill-in would thus be something like “repudiation,” which

means a rejection or a refusal to deal with something.

*Memento* (an object serving as a reminder; souvenir) and *commemoration* (a service, celebration, etc. serving to remember a person or event) are an incorrect (and imperfect) pair. *Manifestation* (the action or fact of showing an abstract idea; symptom or sign) and *vindication* (exoneration, acquittal) have no relationship.

15. **Penetrate, Infiltrate.** You are told that Nathan Hale was a spy working for the nascent (coming into being) United States, and that he was captured by the British. That means he must have been involved in some kind of espionage in “British-controlled” New York. A good fill-in would be “break into.”

*Thwart* (prevent [someone] from accomplishing something) and *conquer* (take control of by military force) are vaguely related, but are not quite a pair. *Permeate* (spread throughout; pervade) and *research* have no relationship.)

16. **Insinuation, Innuendo.** The pivot “more by X than Y” implies some kind of contrast between the two elements. The second element here is “straightforward vulgarity.” You want to contrast that with something. The adjective “sexual” may seem to confuse things; you need a word that will undercut it, such as “allusion.”

*Conversation* (an informal verbal exchange) and *rapport* (a harmonious relationship) are not quite a pair. *Blatancy* (obviousness) and *illusion* (something that looks or seems different from what it is) are almost opposites.

17. **Dormant, Inactive.** The blank is there to describe “inflation” (in a way that contrasts with being entirely “dead”). You’re told that in the future, the purchasing

power of the dollar may fall, which means there will be inflation. So inflation may come back at any time. A good fill-in would be something like “dormant” (there aren’t a lot of simple words that get across this meaning).

*Paralyzed* (unable to move or act), *indigent* (impoverished or needy), *itinerant* (traveling from place to place), and *problematic* (presenting a difficulty) have no relationship.

18. **Barbaric, Primitive.** Boxers are described as having to punch each other in the face, which isn’t “civilized.” In order to do this, they would need to access a part of themselves that was “not so civilized” (which will work well enough as a fill-in here).

*Seething* and *irate* are an incorrect pair, both meaning “angry.” *Insidious* (seductive but harmful; treacherous, deceitful) and *dynamic* (characterized by constant change) have no relationship.

19. **Arduous, Taxing.** This sentence describes creative work as having a particular difficulty, namely that one must be “self-motivated.” Some might contrast this with manual labor, but the author of the sentence wants to render them equivalent. Thus, a good fill-in would be “difficult.”

*Serious* and *grave* are an incorrect pair. Never in the sentence is it discussed whether or not creative work is more serious than manual labor. *Inventive* (able to create, design, or think originally) and *collaborative* (made or done by two or more parties working together) have no relationship.

20. **Vehement, Heated.** If politicians “demonize” teachers unions and other jump into the “fray,” the debate will get more and more “passionately angry,” a good fill-in here.

*Overt* and *unavoidable* are not quite a pair (*overt* means “done openly,” and *unavoidable* means “impossible to ignore”). *Problematic* and *tired* have no relationship.

### **Solutions: 20 Medium Questions**

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1. **Marriage, Commingling.** This sentence begins with the pivot “while,” before describing religions that “insist on the primacy of their particular deity.” “Syncretism” is then introduced as relating in some way to “multiple religious beliefs.” Because of the opening pivot, you know syncretism should be in favor of multiple religious beliefs. The fill-in is something like “inclusion” or “mixture.”

*Division* and *schism*, which often refers to a division within or from a religious organization, are an incorrect pair. *Exclusion* (deliberate act of omission) and *transgression* (act that violates a rule or duty; an offense) have no relationship.

2. **Consummate, Complete.** The target is the ambassador's power. You have a same-direction pivot (“hence”), and the clue is that, due to this power, he “was able to draft and finalize the agreement unilaterally” (seems like a lot of power for a diplomat). A good fill-in would be something like “a lot of” or “total.”

*Tyrannical* and *dictatorial* are a pair that goes too far, introducing a meaning (exercising total power, in a cruel way) that isn't supported by any clues in the sentence.

*Tertiary* (third) and *enigmatic* (mysterious) have no relationship.

**3. Declaim, Trumpet.** The portion of this sentence after the comma is not actually relevant to the blank. All you need to determine is what most politicians do in regards to “their views.” Clearly, they like to “proclaim” or “announce” those views.

*Invoke* and *adduce* are an incorrect pair. *Disparage* (belittle or discredit) and *parrot* (repeat mindlessly) have no relationship.

**4. Colloquium, Symposium.** The sentence tells you that the organization has somehow acquired a “haphazard and often chaotic set of bylaws and regulations.” Thus, it is likely that they will want to get everyone together in order to reconcile all these rules. A good fill-in would be “meeting.”

*Intervention* and *mediation* are an incorrect pair. *Introduction* and *acclamation* (loud demonstration of approval or welcome) have no relationship.

**5. Cloistered, Sheltered.** The pivot word “though” tells you that you are going to contradict the first portion of this sentence, which says that writers ought to have “some experience of life.” Your blank should go against that notion, and because you already have “solitary,” a good fill-in word would be “protected.”

*Enigmatic* and *cryptic* (having hidden meaning; mysterious) are an incorrect near-pair. *Idiosyncratic* (unique to an individual; eccentric, quirky) and *susceptible* (likely to be influenced or harmed by something specific) have no relationship.

**6. Nonchalance, Indifference.** In this sentence, the key is the word “believe,” which functions as a kind of pivot. “Believe” means “to misrepresent or contradict,” suggesting a contrast to “his deep sense of responsibility.” A good fill-in for the blank would be “not caring.”

*Mirth* and *felicity* are an incorrect pair, both meaning something like “happiness,” though *mirth* additionally often implies laughter. *Concern* and *sagacity* (keen judgment) have no relationship.

**7. Xenophobic, Bigoted.** The blank here is defined by the second half of the sentence. Patriotism represents the “elevation of one country to the rank of quintessential on earth,” that is, saying or believing that one country is the epitome or purest example among all countries on earth. So your blank should be something that involves the “demonization of other people.” A good fill-in would be “prejudiced.”

*Minatory* and *truculent* are not quite a pair (the former means “threatening,” while the latter means “aggressively defiant”), and *unethical* and *nationalistic* have no relationship to each other. It is certainly true that excessive patriotism is *nationalistic*, but this word does not match the clue in the sentence.

**8. Forbearance, Temperance.** It’s important to know the word “debauchery” (meaning “excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures”) to solve this question. The sentence describes a husband-to-be who will *not* be engaging in debauchery at the bachelor party, so you need a word that describes someone who exhibits “self-control” or “moderation.”

*Fiat* (authoritative decree) and *autonomy* (the right to self-government; independence) are not quite a pair, and are incorrect anyway. *Gentility* (the state of belonging to polite society; refinement of manner) and *tenacity* (the quality of being persistent or stubborn) have no relationship.

9. **Vilifying, Maligning.** The rally here is described as discussing politics “humorously but civilly, without” doing the thing in the blank. A good fill-in for the blank would be “abusing” or “badmouthing.”

*Lampooning* and *caricaturing* make an incorrect pair, both meaning “mocking or ridiculing,” though *caricaturing* specifically means to do so by exaggerating particular features or traits. Though they are close to the correct meaning for your blank, the sentence mentions that the rally was “humorous.” This means that *lampooning* and *caricaturing*, both of which imply a kind of humorous teasing, would be welcome at the rally, so not plausible for the blank. *Bespeaking* (suggesting; ordering or reserving something in advance) and *eulogizing* (to praise highly, especially at a memorial service) have no relationship (and the latter is the opposite of what you want here).

10. **Sanctioned, Endorsed.** The second half of this sentence tells you that reports of corporal punishment receive an “overwhelmingly negative popular response.” This means that the military would be unlikely to “authorize” these forms of abuse.

*Upbraided* (criticized), *considered*, *rejected*, and *polarized* (broken up into separate groups) have no relationship.

11. **Quagmire, Morass.** The first part of the sentence, which describes how the

budget debate “progressed well...in spite of...squabbling,” is very important. If you didn’t see that, you might be tempted to choose the wrong words here. However, because of the pivot “but,” you want something that contrasts with something that progresses well. A good fill-in would be “mess” or “muddle.”

*Feud* and *quarrel* are an incorrect pair. While they correctly get across the negative spin you want for our blank, they don’t address the idea of progressing badly, and the “but” indicates a need to contrast with a situation that was always prone to “squabbling.” *Covenant* and *accord* are an incorrect pair, both indicating an agreement.

12. **Crucial, Requisite.** This is a tough question, because the sentence gives you only “subtle” as a clue. Your blank should oppose it, but you don’t want the opposite of “subtle” (which would be something like “obvious,” which clearly doesn’t make any sense here). Instead, you need to think about the overall meaning of the sentence. Most likely, the point is that the difference between similes and metaphors is “important.”

*Null* and *nominal* are an incorrect pair, both meaning “insignificant.” *Synoptic* (presenting a summary of the whole) and *optional* have no relationship.

13. **Fallacious, Specious.** This sentence is thick with content, and it’s important that you understand all of it. You are given two statements about economics. First, that Keynesian economics may or may not recommend that “the limit (on government debt) should be perpetually raised.” Then you are told definitively that Keynes says “deficit spending must be done responsibly.” If the latter is true, then it is likely that he would *not* have made the former recommendation. So your blank should

say something like “incorrect.”

*Indigenous* (native to or naturally occurring in a region), *corrupt*, *venial* (forgivable or pardonable), and *axiomatic* (self-evident or unquestionable) have no relationship. In addition, *axiomatic* is the opposite of what is needed for the blank.

14. **Patois, Jargon.** This sentence is describing rebellion as the effect of a communication gap, which you will need to make concrete with the blank. Something “protean” (meaning “tending to change frequently or easily”) is being compared to the “older generation’s calcified language.” Actually, the best fill-in for your blank is simply “language.”

*Defiance* and *insubordination* are an incorrect pair, both meaning something like “disobedience.” *Prolixity* and *verbosity* are another incorrect pair, which introduces a theme trap, as both words mean “wordiness.”

15. **Grousing, Protesting.** “Cantankerous” means “bad-tempered and argumentative.” Because there is no pivot here, you simply need a word that means those things. A good fill-in for the blank would be “arguing” or “complaining.”

*Imputing* (attributing or blaming), *assaulting* (physically attacking), *convulsing* (suffering violent involuntary contraction of the muscles), and *imbibing* (drinking) have no relationship.

16. **Fracas, Altercation.** In this sentence, you need to figure out what kind of thing would result in the police being called—likely, some kind of “crime” or “fight.”

*Discourse* and *colloquy* are an incorrect pair, both meaning “conversation.” *Battle* may be close to what you want, but relates to a larger event than a bar fight. *Mutiny* (open rebellion against authorities) is not related to the others.

17. **Eclectic, Multifarious.** In this sentence, the word “surprisingly” is functioning as a pivot, disagreeing with the portion before the comma. There, you learn that the woman in question had a “sheltered upbringing” and a “limited breadth of experience.” Your blank should be the opposite of that. A good fill-in would be “varied” or “not limited.”

*Shallow* and *facile* are an incorrect pair, in that both can mean “superficial.” *Profound* has the right spin, but it isn’t the opposite of “limited” or “sheltered.” *Callow* (immature or inexperienced) has no relationship with the other choices, and it incorrectly agrees with “limited breadth of experience.”

18. **Rail, Fulminate.** The word “but” acts as a pivot here, taking you in the opposite direction of the adjectives initially used to define documentary filmmakers: “dispassionate” and “objective.” A good fill-in would be “speak out.”

*Advertise* (draw attention to publicly in order to promote sales), *inveigle* (win, or win over, by flattery), *strain* (make a strenuous effort), and *aspire* (pronounce a sound in the exhalation of breath) have no relationship. Note that *inveigle* is *not* the same as *inveigh* (which does not appear as a choice but would have been a suitable correct answer, as it means “express angry disapproval”—the GRE sometimes plays on commonly confused words).

19. **Piquant, Zesty.** There are two important portions of this sentence to focus on. First, the word “praised,” implying that the critic’s review will be positive. The second part is the way he’s described as using “the language of food to describe films.” So you want two words that are positive and that could also be used to describe food.

*Spectacular* and *stupefying* are an incorrect pair. They are both positive, but they aren’t generally used to describe food. *Insipid* (bland, tasteless, or flavorless) and *brilliant* have no relationship, and *insipid* is the opposite of what is needed in the blank.

20. **Bruises, Contusions.** In this sentence, a short list of possible injuries after a skydiving accident is described. Two of the items are “broken bones” and “a gash,” which means your blank should be a physical injury different from those two. A good fill-in would be “bruises.”

*Torpor* (a state of physical inactivity; apathy, lethargy), *trauma* (physical injury; shock following a disturbing event or injury), *finesse* (skillful or adroit handling), and *lesions* (wounds, ulcers, tumors, etc.) include no synonym pairs. In addition, *finesse* is not a physical symptom, as are the other two clues given in the sentence, while *torpor* is a physical condition but not an injury.

## ***Solutions: 20 Hard Questions***

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1. **Envoy, Emissary.** The person in question is serving as “official” something for Japan to another country, and is “called upon to answer questions about the Japanese government’s position.” A good fill-in would be something like

“representative” or “ambassador.”

*Tyro* and *neophyte* are an incorrect pair, both meaning “beginner.” *Ascetic* (self-denying; austere) and *libertine* (one who is debauched or without moral restraint) are not synonyms, though both have something to do with self-control, in opposite ways.

2. **Palliate, Damp.** The target is both the leadership and the “stridency of their rhetoric”—you need the relationship between those two things. “While” is an opposite-side pivot. In the first part of the sentence, the protests are “uncompromising.” Thus, in the second part, they should be softer, more on the side of compromising. Since “stridency” means harshness and is on the same side as “uncompromising,” the group thus chose to “reduce” or “tone down” the stridency.

*Metamorphose*, *gild*, *wane*, and *succor* do not contain any pairs. *Wane* means “decrease” and is an attractive trap answer. However, *wane* is an intransitive verb—that is, something (such as the moon) *wanes* on its own; you can't *wane* an object. Therefore, the word does not fit in this sentence. *Metamorphose* (change) could work, but it doesn't indicate the direction of the change (increase or decrease), which the blank needs to do in order to show that the leaders “wisely” chose to do something. *Gild* (cover in gold; give a deceitfully pleasing appearance to) and *succor* (aid, assist, or relieve) have no relationship.

3. **Quiescent, Abeyant.** The clue here is that “activists will be newly galvanized.” Because of the pivot “but,” this means you need a blank that means the opposite of “galvanized.” A good fill-in word would be “dormant” (implying that the movement

is quiet but could rise again).

*Dogged* (persistent, tenacious, or stubbornly determined), *interminable* (endless), *lissome* (flexible or easily bent), and *feckless* (ineffective, lacking in vitality) have no relationship.

**4. Equitable, Apposite.** The first half of this sentence sets up the topic, but the important information is in the second half. There, you're told about the "most ardent supporter [of corporal punishment]." This supporter agrees with detractors on at least one thing, for which "evenhanded and thorough" is a clue. A good fill-in for your blank would be "deserved" or "fair."

*Clement* and *merciful* are an incorrect synonym pair. They both go against the spin that the blank calls for. *Delimited* (having limits established; bounded) and *tantamount* (equivalent; virtually the same as) are not related.

**5. Chimerical, Fallible.** The portion of this sentence after the blank tells you that "results tend to be colored by...personal proclivities and suppositions." This provides an explanation of the blank, which in turn is trying to tell you something about "impartiality." That last portion describes something the exact opposite of "impartial," so a good fill-in for your blank would be "wrong" or "nonexistent."

*Inane* and *fatuous* are an incorrect pair, both meaning "silly." While the "premise of impartiality" may not in fact exist, that doesn't make it silly. *Prejudicial* (harmful; detrimental) and *vexing* (irksome; irritating) have no relationship.

**6. Epicurean, Gustatory.** Everything in this sentence relates to food, whether it's the

“texture and taste” or the “notion of what constitutes a meal.” This means you need a word that relates to food. A good fill-in would be “culinary.”

*Carnal* (relating to physical, esp. sexual, activities) and *voluptuous* (characterized by luxury or sensual pleasure) are an incorrect pair, relating to sensual delights rather than those merely relating to food. *Salubrious* (promoting health or well being) and *terrestrial* (of, on, or relating to the earth) have no relationship.

**7. Gist, Pith.** The verb “drone” has a very specific meaning, implying that someone is going on at length in a dull or boring way. The implication is that the point could be made more efficiently. This sentence then tells you that a *précis* (summary) can be found in the tome's first few pages. This *précis* is really the book's “essence” or “thrust,” which is the kind of word you want for the blank.

*Adage* (a traditional expression of a common observation), *stub* (a short part left after a larger part was broken off), *nimbus* (a circle of light), and *nut*, which among its many definitions can mean “a hard problem or task,” have no relationship.

**8. Collate, Juxtapose.** The final portion of this sentence describes “studying the differences and similarities” between two different things. This implies you'll be doing some sort of comparison, so a good fill-in word would be “compare.”

*Aggregate*, *agglomerate*, and *glean* are an incorrect triple, all meaning “gather.” While gathering the data together is required in order to make a comparison, the sentence already said “not only to collect.” All of these words are just fancy versions of “collect,” which you don't need to repeat. *Ratiocinate*, which means “to

reason logically," doesn't match any other choice. In addition, it doesn't quite fit the context: you can reason logically *about* the score reports, but you wouldn't reason the score reports themselves.

**9. Volleys, Salvos.** The second half of this sentence doesn't tell you anything interesting. In fact, everything you need to know comes from the few words before the blank: "trenches were dug so that soldiers could avoid" something. What would you avoid in a trench? "Bullets," more or less, or "barrages," if you wanted to get a little fancier.

*Provocations* and *goadings* are an incorrect pair, though *goad* specifically means "to provoke by prodding." *Fervency* (fervor; strong feeling of excitement) and *impredications* (offensive words or phrases said in anger) have no relationship.

**10. Genteel, Courtly.** Near the beginning of the sentence, Cary Grant is described as *suave*, meaning "confident and elegant." Your blank should not mean the exact same thing, or it would be redundant. Instead, you want a word that is best exemplified by someone who always pulls out a woman's chair, such as "well-mannered."

*Debonair* and *cosmopolitan* are an incorrect pair. These words mean "sophisticated," but they don't necessarily imply good manners. *Consummate* (complete or perfect) and *waggish* (humorous in a playful way) have no relationship.

**11. Subjective, Personal.** The sentence states that the attempt to find "parity," or fairness, is "fallacious," or logically incorrect. How could fairness be illogical? Only if it isn't real or objectively determinable. A good fill-in would be "prejudiced" or

"based on feelings."

*Pragmatic* and *utilitarian* are a near-pair, meaning "practical." *Introverted* (introspective) and *illicit* (unlawful) are not related.

12. **Erudition, Cerebrality.** This sentence compares the blank with speeches that feature "ignorance" and "stupidity." You also want something that relates to "education." A good fill-in would be "knowledge," which is the result of education.

*Bromide* (commonplace or trite saying) and *bloviation* (talking at length in a pompous or boastful way) both have some relationship to speech, but they aren't a pair and neither relates to "education" or "ignorance." *Condescension* (patronizing attitude; disdain) is similar to *bloviation*, but both disagree with the clue "actually" (it is not surprising that condescension would be resented by voters!), and neither contrasts properly with "ignorance." *Patrimony* (inheritance from father or other male ancestor) is unrelated to everything else.

13. **Semblance, Veneer.** In this sentence, you're told about a man who has been fired and doesn't tell his wife and kids. This somehow relates to "plenitude," which is "the condition of being full or complete." Clearly, if you get fired and don't tell your family, it's because you want to pretend that you're still okay. A good fill-in word would be "appearance."

*Corollaries* and *consequences* are an incorrect pair. *Paradigms* (things serving as an example or model) and *prepossessions* (attitudes or beliefs formed beforehand) have no relationship.

**14. Indiscriminate, Blanket.** The sentence tells you that Don Juan had “an astronomical number of amatory adventures,” but that it was not because he had a “surfeit of charisma or skillfulness.” What might explain this discrepancy? Perhaps if Don Juan weren’t particularly choosy. A good fill-in for the blank would be “not choosy.”

*Sumptuous* and *sybaritic* are an incorrect pair, meaning “luxurious” and “devoted to luxury or pleasure,” respectively. While they both describe someone like Don Juan, they don’t explain how he had so many lovers. *Lurid* (gruesome, shocking) and *covert* (not openly done; veiled) have no relationship.

**15. Attenuate, Abate.** The sentence indicates that “even” major campaign finance reform will “fail” to do something to “the influence of money.” This money “directly relates” to a politician being able to become a politician, so the influence of money must be pretty strong. Thus, the reform proposals will fail to “lessen” or “reduce” the influence.

*Graft* (join or unite), *pander* (cater to the lowest or most base desires), *importune* (harass with constant demands; annoy, irritate), and *indemnify* (protect against loss or damage) have no relationship. On the GRE, the choices for a given blank will always be of the same form of speech; here, they are verbs. Don’t confuse the verb *graft* with the noun *graft*, which means “acquisition of money (or other valuable) in dishonest or questionable ways” and represents a theme trap here.

**16. Interrogate, Limn.** There are no pivots in this sentence, so you simply need a word that fits the description of a book that explores the “many ways in which 19<sup>th</sup>-century women writers....” In other words, you can just fill in the blank with

“explore.” Note that “interrogate” is being used in a figurative sense here (i.e., it’s not referring to a literal interrogation, as of a criminal), though the goal of both types of interrogation is to pry deeply into an issue.

*Debunk* and *explode* are an incorrect pair, meaning “disprove.” *Interpolate* (insert between parts, pieces, or things) and *castigate* (criticize or punish severely) have no relationship. *Castigate* almost fits into a triple with the incorrect pair, but it’s more of a criticism than an attempt to disprove something.

17. **Languor, Lethargy.** This sentence creates a contrast with the pivot “while” between a positive and negative view of the same fact. The positive view is that certain cultures prioritize “relaxation” and “moderation between work and play.” The negative view of this would be something akin to “laziness.”

*Enfeeblement* and *enervation* are an incorrect pair, meaning “weakening” or “weakness.” Though they are close to what you want, they imply a forceful taking away of energy, which is not the same as simply being lazy or tired. *Obtundity* (lessening of intensity; dulling or deadening) and *seemliness* (the state or condition of conforming to standards of proper conduct) have no relationship.

18. **Extraneous, Unnecessary.** Autodidacts (“those who teach themselves”) would argue against “enforced” lucubration (study) and “standard” education. A good fill-in might simply be “unnecessary.”

*Slack* and *lax* are an incorrect pair, meaning “loose.” *Prudent* and *sagacious* are an incorrect pair, meaning “wise; having good judgment.”

19. **Dusky, Crepuscular.** The only clue in this sentence comes in the second half, a “twilit avenue in a long since abandoned city.” So you want a word that implies “twilit” and “abandoned,” such as “dark.”

*Urban* and *civic* are something of a pair here. Though they both reflect the sentence's reference to a “city,” they fail to correctly reference either “twilit” or “abandoned,” which are really the most descriptive terms in the original sentence. *Precipitous* (extremely steep) and *avuncular* (relating to an uncle; kind to younger people) have no relationship.

20. **Ineluctable, Inexorable.** The key phrase here is “the inertia of history.” Inertia is “resistance to change,” so this phrase must mean that history is on track and can't deviate from that track. So your blank here should be something like “unchangeable.”

*Incontrovertible* (not able to be denied or disputed), *interminable* (endless), *infallible* (incapable of making mistakes or being wrong), and *unspeakable* (not able to be expressed in words; too horrible to express in words) have no relationship.

*Chapter 4  
of*

*Text Completion & Sentence Equivalence*

*Learning Vocabulary*

## *In This Chapter...*

*Practical Strategies & Games for Learning Vocabulary*

*Flash Card Games and Activities*

*Use Roots Ahead of Time*

*Using Social Media to Buttress Your Vocabulary Studies*

## *Chapter 4:*

### *Learning Vocabulary*

Many students want to know how many words they have to learn in order to get a high score on the GRE, but this is actually a more complicated issue than it might at first appear.

Imagine this: You tell us you know everyone in your university graduating class! All 2,000 people! Well, how can we test this astounding assertion? One good way would be to start by picking 10 reasonably well-known students and see if you know them. If you do, then we'll pick 10 very shy students, rarely seen around campus, and see if you know them, too. If you know all 20 students that we randomly select, then we would tend to believe your assertion that you know all 2,000 people, or some number very close.

That's what the GRE is doing. They're not testing you on a couple hundred words because they want you to know those couple hundred words. They're testing you on 100+ easier words in the first Verbal section, and then if you do well, they're testing you on 100+ harder words in the second Verbal section. If you do well at all the words they hit you with, the GRE is assuming (and rewarding you for) presumably having a much larger vocabulary than was actually tested.

It would be a truly pointless process if you could simply memorize the dictionary definitions of 1,000 vocabulary words, then the GRE tested you on those words using the definitions you memorized, and then you could get a good GRE score and forget about those words. That's not going to happen. Students who try it end

up disappointed. (We suspect that these are the same students who spent all of school asking, “Is this going to be on the test?”)

Quite frankly, when you learn words for the GRE, you are trying to trick the test into thinking that, for the past 10+ years of your life, you have been the model English student who looked up all the words you didn't know in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Great Gatsby*, and then spent 4 years in university reading university-level material, going back to look things up or ask questions every time you got stumped. And then, if you've been out of school, that you've continued reading college-level material ever since.

Simulating that level of verbal knowledge (when you haven't actually been doing the things listed above) takes some work. It can be done! But it's very important to *learn*—not just memorize—vocabulary words.

Many students make the mistake of memorizing dictionary definitions of words without really understanding those definitions or being able to comfortably use those words in sentences. Memorizing by itself is not learning. It is not flexible. If you've learned *torpid*, you shouldn't be thrown off by *torpor*. If you've learned *anthropology* and *engender*, you should be able to make some reasonable assumptions about *anthropogenesis*.

You want to learn words like *tralduce* and *bonhomie* in the same way you know words like *study* and *mistake*—that is, you can barely even remember a time when you didn't know those words.

For sources of difficult material, try *The Economist* ([economist.com](http://economist.com)), *Scientific American* ([scientificamerican.com](http://scientificamerican.com)), *Smithsonian* ([smithsonianmag.com](http://smithsonianmag.com)), *Foreign* ([foreignaffairs.com](http://foreignaffairs.com)), *MIT Technology Review* ([technologyreview.com](http://technologyreview.com)), or any of the articles posted on [aldaily.com](http://aldaily.com) (that's "Arts and Letters Daily"). Of course, these are precisely the same resources recommended for improving your reading comprehension; certainly, it is possible to do both at the same time!

If you've ever learned a foreign language, think about the words that were easiest to learn. When you're in class, most of the words you learn (stove, tire, classroom, grandmother) seem equally important. But when you are actually in a foreign country, trying to speak that language, it is *very, very easy* to learn and remember words and phrases like "bathroom" and "How much?" and "No pigs' feet, please." That is, the easiest things to learn are things that you *really wanted to know* at the time that you looked them up. It's easier to retain a new word when there's a "hole" in your knowledge that you just cannot wait to fill.

Similarly, if you are reading something interesting and come across a word you don't know, and then you look up the word and consider its usage in the sentence you were just puzzling over—well, that's almost as good as learning the word "bathroom" when you really needed to use one.

Finally, don't hesitate to look up or ask someone about words you *thought* you knew, but seem that to be used in novel ways. (Did you notice what just happened there? As a noun, a *novel* is a book-length work of fiction, but as an adjective, *novel* means "new, original.") How about the use of *informed by* in the sentence, "Her historical analysis of family dynamics in the antebellum South is informed by an academic background in feminist theory"? Clearly, an "academic background in

feminist theory” can’t talk—*informed by* means “influenced by” in this context. Or the use of *qualified* in the sentence, “Dr. Wong could give only qualified approval to the theory, as the available data was limited in scope.” (*Qualified* here means “limited, conditional, holding back.”)

If you read a definition of a word—on a flash card, in a test prep book, or anywhere else—and it doesn’t make sense to you, look up the word in several online dictionaries ([Dictionary.com](#), [TheFreeDictionary.com](#), and [m-w.com](#)), ask someone, and/or simply Google the word to see how other people are using it.

Once you’ve studied the definition, read the word in context, and worked the word into conversation a few times (this may cause your friends to look at you funny, but it’ll be worth it!), that word is probably yours for life.

Finally, in embarking on your vocabulary-learning journey, it is crucial to cultivate a productive attitude.

Learning 500–1,500 new words certainly seems daunting (although an assiduous approach will indubitably be conducive to a virtuosic lexical performance!). Some students say, “I’m already a college graduate. Why do I have to spend months studying for this exam? That’s just too much time.”

Here’s one way to look at it: if you do physical exercise for only one hour a week, you’ve almost thrown that time away, because that’s not enough time to get results. But if you exercise for five hours a week, you’ll end up in much better shape! That is, it’s exercising *insufficiently* that is a waste of time. Learning words *shallowly*

is also a waste of time.

Similarly, if you spend three weeks cramming for the GRE—memorizing words just for the GRE score, without really becoming a more verbally educated person—you probably won't improve your score that much, and it really will seem like you wasted your time, because what you're doing is really about the GRE and nothing else. But if you spend months developing a more erudite vocabulary, improving your comprehension of graduate-level articles, and becoming significantly more articulate, then you have remodeled your brain for the better. That time is not lost! Those skills will benefit you forever (i.e., in graduate school!).

Here's something to think about—the GRE test writers aren't evil. They don't want to hold you back. They want to test real skills. Sure, you might be able to game the test a little bit with tricks and quick fixes, but probably not enough to achieve your goal score.

A serious, academic approach to GRE study isn't about tricks and quick fixes. It's about the actual material and skills that the GRE is designed to test. And no amount of time is too much to spend on becoming a more knowledgeable person, equipped with hundreds of new words that can be assembled in infinite combinations to express your ideas for decades to come.

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## PRACTICAL STRATEGIES AND GAMES FOR LEARNING VOCABULARY

### How to Make and Use Flash Cards

Flash cards are a time-tested way to learn vocabulary, and we like them a lot. You can make your own, or you can use Manhattan Prep's *500 Essential Words* and *500 Advanced Words* GRE Flash Card sets. While we're big fans of our own flash cards (we made them after all!), evidence has shown that you're more likely to retain the information if you make the cards yourself.

If you decide to make your own flash cards, try to write sentences for each word, and add synonyms or extra information where appropriate. Here is a sample of one of our flash cards that you might wish to use as a model for making your own:

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***torpid***  
(adj)

Also **torpor** (noun)

---

**Definition:** Slow, sluggish, lazy

**Usage:** After a massive Thanksgiving dinner, Jane felt too **torpid** to even get up off the couch. “My **torpor** is overwhelming,” she said.

---

You can find a word's synonyms by using the "Thesaurus" tab on [Dictionary.com](#), although make sure you click on a synonym and verify that it really is similar in meaning—many thesauruses will give more than 20 synonyms for a single word, but most of them won't be that closely related (and some will be quite obscure). Make sure to look at the etymologies of any words you don't know. This is how you learn the roots of words; such knowledge will occasionally allow you to work out the definitions of words you've never seen before!

So, flash cards are pretty important, but here's what a lot of people actually *do* with flash cards:

*Okay, here's my enormous stack of flash cards. How many is this? 500? Okay, let's start. Synoptic. Hmmn, I don't know. Okay, I guess I'll just look at the answer, then. Oh, okay. Next. Turpitude. Hmmn, I don't know. Okay, I guess I'll just look at the answer, then. Oh, okay. Next. Platitude. Hmmn, I don't know. Okay, I guess I'll just look at the answer, then. Oh, okay. Next...*

You see how this is getting you nowhere?

One problem with this approach is that your brain has no motivation to actually remember much, because, deep down, it knows that the information is already written on the flash card, and you'll be seeing that flash card again next time it comes up in the rotation. (You forget way more than you remember—imagine if you remembered everything you saw, did, ate, etc., in just a single day! Your brain dumps well over 99% of the information it is presented with. You need to give it a very good reason to do otherwise!)

The other problem with this approach is that you have no idea when you're "done," and it rarely feels like you're making any progress. Instead, use this method:

1. Pull out a small stack of cards, perhaps 20.
2. Go through the stack one word at a time. When you get one right, *take it out of the stack* and lay it aside.
3. As you continue, the stack will get smaller and smaller. It will become easier and easier to remember the words that are left.

Now you're done. You did a set. Move on to another set if you like.

Because this exercise has an ending (as opposed to just cycling through your flash cards over and over again), you get to feel a sense of accomplishment when you're finished.

Depending on your timeline and goal score, you might decide to do this once or twice per day. In fact, if you are working a full-time job and have a hard time studying on weeknights, make a vow that you can do this one thing *every* day, no matter what (if you're really tired, you can make it a 12–15 card set rather than 20, but you should do at least a little vocab every single day).

One benefit of physical flash cards (as opposed to various electronic study tools) is that you can physically spread out and group your flash cards in a way that is not possible when you can only see one card at a time on a screen.

Here are some strategies that take advantage of the old-school properties of flash cards:

**Whack-a-Word :** Whack-a-Mole is an arcade game in which you have to hit a bunch of mechanical creatures with a mallet before the time runs out. Play Whack-a Word by spreading out a huge pile of flash cards on a table, bed, or floor, and then trying to remove words from the pile by defining them without looking at the card. If you get a word wrong, put it aside in a “to review” pile. If you end up with words you don't know anything about, make a stack and try the technique mentioned on the previous page. Once you've learned those words better, spread them all back out and play Whack-a-Word one more time. Whack-a-Word is also fun with a friend. Take turns defining words and removing them from the spread, working together to clear the space as quickly as possible.

**Storytelling :** Take a stack of about 20 cards. Shuffle, and don't look at the first card. Think of a topic for your story—something funny and interesting. It's very important that every sentence in your story *defines* the word in question. For example, if you decide to tell a story about robots and monkeys, and your first card says *captious* (“tending to find fault or raise petty objections”), you wouldn't want to write, “Monkeys are captious,” because that doesn't really help you define the word. Instead, write something like: “The monkeys were captious creatures, always arguing about some little thing or another.” Now you turn to the next card,

*itinerary...*

The Robot/Monkey war began when a monkey went on vacation and misread an item on his itinerary, causing him to accidentally invade Robot Headquarters when he really just meant to visit the Monkey Art Museum. The robots were jingoists, so patriotic towards their robot kingdom that the accidental monkey invasion was interpreted as a declaration of war. The robots considered waging a war of espionage, secretly assassinating the monkey king, but decided that they'd have better luck with direct warfare. Providentially, the monkeys discovered oil in Monkeyland and were able to sell it to buy weapons to defend themselves. One taciturn monkey finally got the courage to speak up and suggest that the monkeys engage in ninja training. A meal of sushi helped whet their appetites for the training.

You can see where this is going, and it's ridiculous—but a fun way to learn! The brain retains information much better when it *does something* with that information (such as using words in sentences) rather than merely *looks at* information.

### **More on Storytelling and Using Words in Sentences**

You can also use storytelling as a vocabulary learning technique without involving flash cards. Use any GRE vocabulary list or source and write a story using 20 or more words—either one per sentence or as many as you can incorporate.

If you're not so big on telling stories, try writing a daily journal entry using some number of words per day.

You could even vow to work a certain number of words per day into your regular emails to unsuspecting colleagues and family members. (Use caution when dropping bombastic language on your boss, but why not try out your new lexicon on your parents? They'll probably be glad to hear from you no matter how grandiloquent you become!)

### **Chat with a Study Buddy**

Another fun technique is to find a study partner and agree to email or text each other every day using a certain number of GRE words in your emails (three seems about right—if you make the task too daunting, it might be too hard to stick with the plan).

Hey there, are you wearing anything *ostentatious* today?

No, I am feeling very *nondescript*, probably because I am so *timorous*.

Whatever! You are actually very *bombastic*—you use big words all the time, just to show off.

Um, isn't that the point? That is why our knowledge of vocabulary is no longer *inchoate*!

So *veracious*!

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#### USE ROOTS AHEAD OF TIME

The Appendix of this book includes a targeted Root List. Take a good look through it.

Take judicious advantage of roots. There is no doubt that you need to know a good number of Latin and Greek roots to understand modern English academic vocabulary. Many words are easily decomposed into roots and can be understood clearly in terms of those roots.

Because the meaning of words may have changed quite a bit since the time of the Roman Empire, though, some words now have misleading roots or derivations. During the exam itself, you have to be very careful when you resort to root analysis to guess an unknown word's meaning. The GRE loves to use words with surprising meanings. For instance, *baleful* does not mean "full of hay bales"—it means threatening or menacing. Although a *scribe* is a person whose job is to copy by hand, *proscribe* isn't really about writing—it means prohibit or condemn.

Still, if you learn that a word *doesn't* relate very logically to its roots, that can be helpful in itself. Many words have strange and memorable relationships with their etymological roots. For instance, the word *desultory* means "lacking in method or purpose; disappointing." That's not so interesting, but if you know that the word comes from a Latin word describing circus riders who *jumped from* horse to horse (*de* = from, *sult* = jump), then you might remember the word *desultory* better. *Proscribe*, meaning "to forbid by law or denounce," contains the root *scribe* (as in *script*, *scribble*, *scripture*, etc.) because, in ancient times, to *proscribe* was to publish a record of someone's punishment—to condemn or sentence that person publicly.

Here are a few more favorites (more information like this appears in *500 Essential Words & 500 Advanced Words* GRE Flash Card sets from Manhattan Prep):

**Amortize** (gradually pay off a debt, or gradually write off an asset) contains

the root “mort,” meaning death. **Amortization** is when a financial obligation dies a long, slow death.

**Anachronism** (something that is not in its correct historical time; a mistake in chronology, such as by assigning a person or event to the wrong time period)—the prefix “ana” means “against,” and “chron” means “time.” This is one word you can work out entirely with a knowledge of roots: **anachronistic** means “against time.”

**Legerdemain** (sleight-of-hand, trickery, deception) comes from Middle French, meaning “light of hand”. The modern French word for hand is *main*, which is related to the root in the English *manual* (relating to hands, as in *manual labor*) and *manumit* (free from slavery, untie the hands).

**Malediction** (a curse) has the prefix *mal* (meaning “bad,” of course). The root “dict” comes from “dicere” (to say) and also appears in *dictator*, *dictionary*, and *indict* (connect to a crime), as well as in **malediction**’s antonym, *benediction* (blessing).

Not all words have a cool story or a helpful derivation. For instance, *pulchritude* means beauty. The reason that seems so weird (*You’re so pulchritudinous* really doesn’t sound like a compliment) is that the Latin root “pulcher,” meaning “beautiful,” doesn’t occur in any other English words.

So recognize that roots are just one of many helpful tools. One good way to proceed is to go through the Root List in the Appendix and just focus on roots that actually look familiar to you (and like something you’d be able to spot in the

future); for instance, *circum* (meaning “around”) appears in *circumference*, and it’s pretty hard to miss the root in *circumnavigate*, *circumcise*, *circumambulate*, and *circumlocution*. So you might make a flash card for this and other roots that seem most useful to you.

## USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO BUTTRESS YOUR VOCABULARY STUDIES

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Do you spend all day on Facebook or Twitter? Developing a social network around your word network is an incredible way to make vocabulary fun, and to get other people's perspective on words that are new to you. In fact, scientific studies show that having a social group related to your studies can substantially improve learning.

Supposedly, your Facebook friends are your, well...friends, right? So they should be supportive of your GRE efforts. Try announcing on Facebook that you're studying for the GRE and will be posting vocabulary words for the next few months.

**News Feed**

Share:  Status

Hey, guys! Did you know that INVEIGLE means to entice or lure, or get something by flattery, cleverness, or offering incentives? Now you do! Can I INVEIGLE anyone into buying me dinner tonight?

**Top News · Most Recent**

**Share**

If you post a word and its definition as your status update, it only takes one hilarious comment from a friend (some people have way too much time on their hands) to help you remember the word forever.

Manhattan Prep maintains a Facebook presence (we're "Word Beast"), and we were pleased to see that someone posted the word *deleterious* (meaning "harmful or damaging") in a status update ("Does anyone actually use that word?").

A friend wrote back:

"Deleterious" is used quite a bit in genetics. For example, "Epigenetic silencing of transposable elements may reduce 'deleterious' effects on neighboring gene expression in the genome."

The original poster replied, "I looked for examples of this word's use in a sentence. It seems that 'deleterious effects' is indeed the way it is most often used."

Now that's how to learn *deleterious*!

You can also use Twitter as a tool for learning vocabulary. You can follow Manhattan Prep at:

<http://twitter.com/manhattanprep>

But don't just be a follower. Start up a Twitter account (if you haven't already) and Tweet each word you study. You can simply post words and definitions, or try

using the words in sentences (or both!).

## What's happening?

MODISH= "stylish or contemporary." In the US, "a la mode" means w/ice cream ( "pie a la mode"), but it's really French for "in fashion"! #gre

 Add your location

0

Tweet

Try tagging your Tweets with #gre or #grevocab, and you'll find a lot of new friends who are also studying for the GRE. It's a word party!

*Chapter 5  
of*

Text Completion & Sentence Equivalence

IDIOMS & METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE

## *In This Chapter...*

*List of Idioms & Metaphorical Language*

## *Chapter 5*

### IDIOMS & METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE

The following section contains expressions that are appropriate for use in the type of writing excerpted on the GRE, and that often appear in writing about culture, literature, business, science, and history.

It also contains words used metaphorically; for instance, an *albatross* is large web-footed bird, but it is also a burden or obstacle, as in the expression *an albatross around one's neck* (from “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” in which a sailor had to wear an albatross around his neck as punishment for his sins).

This section will be extremely helpful for many non-native speakers of English. Others may simply want to look over it and see if there are any “surprises.”

Idioms are not the same as vocabulary words and are not likely to appear in GRE answer choices; rather, they are likely to appear in complex Text Completion sentences and especially in Reading Comprehension passages. This content is important for both areas of the GRE.

To increase retention of this material, try to use these expressions in your own sentences.

The idioms are followed by a 20-question drill allowing you to test your understanding of these expressions when used in complex sentences.

## List of Idioms & Metaphorical Language

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“...” – Quote marks can indicate 1) that the word or phrase is not to be taken literally; 2) the introduction of a new, made-up word or phrase. So, some context is needed to understand the meaning. For example:

The factory employs several people who add defects and rough edges to its popular line of “**antique**” furniture. (The furniture is not really antique).

The company has sent its top people to ethics training and courses on Aristotle in an attempt to build a “**philosophically correct**” business. (The quotes tell you that the concept of *philosophical correctness* is something new—likely invented by the company itself—rather than a well-established concept or institution.)

**Account for** – 1) Take into consideration or make adjustments based on; 2) cause. This is not the same as *give an account of*, which just means *explain*.

I **accounted for** the fact that Joe is always late by telling him to meet us at 1:30 when the event is really at 2. (Here, *accounted for* means *made adjustments to compensate for*.)

I did get us the meeting, but Ellen's hard work **accounted for** the rest of our success. (Here, *accounted for* means *caused*.)

**“A given”** – The use of *a given* as a noun is different from the use of *given* alone.

For instance, a person's *given name* is the one *given* by his or her parents (a "first name" in the United States), and we might also say, "The truth differs from the *given explanation*." Here, *given explanation* just means *the explanation that someone gave*. Simple. However, *a given* means something taken for granted, something assumed or that does not require proof. For instance:

When planning my wedding, it was **a given** that my parents would invite anyone they wanted, since they were paying for everything.

It's **a given** that everyone here is against human trafficking—what we disagree about is the best way to fight it.

**Albatross** – A constant burden or worry; an obstacle. Literally, an albatross is a bird. The expression *an albatross around one's neck* creates the silly image of a person wearing a (dead?) bird—but that certainly sounds like a constant burden or worry!

The city has done an admirable job of rebuilding its infrastructure and marketing itself, but the crime rate continues to be an **albatross** around the city's neck in trying to attract tourists.

**All but** – Almost definitely. *The bill's passage is all but assured* means that the bill will almost certainly pass.

Your objections have arrived too late; the matter is **all but** decided.

**And yet** – A stronger way of saying *yet*. The expression *and yet* seems

ungrammatical (two conjunctions right next to each other is very strange—we don't say *and but*), but it is an idiom used for emphasis. It indicates a surprising twist, an ironic realization, etc. It is often used at the beginning of a sentence for emphasis, and can even be used on its own, although this usage is casual.

The company was lauded for its commitment to the environment. **And yet** its employees regularly fly in private jets, creating carbon footprints that would embarrass any true environmentalist.

**Arms race** – Competition between two countries to build up the best and largest supply of weapons. This term is often associated with the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Metaphorically, an arms race is a competition that implies a competitive and perhaps not entirely rational series of escalations.

Analysts carefully watched stock prices as the two Internet giants competed in an **arms race**, expanding rapidly by buying up smaller companies with little due diligence.

**Aside from** – In addition to.

**Aside from** the obvious financial benefits of investing in a socially responsible fund, you can rest assured that your money is used to maximize social good.

**(Adjective) as it is,...** – This pattern is used to contrast the part after the comma with the part before. For instance, *Charming as she is, I just don't want to be friends*

*with her anymore.*

**As pleased as we are** to see more minorities on the board than ever before, discrimination in hiring and promotion is still a serious problem.

**As well as** – Sometimes, *as well as* just means *and*, as in *I had ramen for lunch, as well as a hot dog*. But *as well as* can also be used to mention one thing as a way to contrast with or emphasize another.

**At best** – At the most, interpreted in the most favorable way. *The seminar drew 20 people at best* means that 20 or fewer people attended.

My college algebra teacher can barely factor a polynomial! He is qualified to teach elementary school math, **at best**.

**At fault** – Guilty.

The insurance company is investigating who is **at fault** for the collision.

**At loggerheads** – In conflict, at a standstill.

The strike is not likely to end soon—the transit authority and the union representatives have been **at loggerheads** for weeks.

**At odds** – In conflict.

The teachers union and the state government are always **at odds**.

**At once** – 1) Immediately; 2) at the same time.

If the hurricane comes near the coast, the governor will order us to evacuate **at once**.

The question is whether we can pursue all three plans **at once**, or if we only have the resources to try them one at a time.

**Beside the point** – Irrelevant, off-topic.

**The better part** – The largest or longest part. *The better part* does not have to be good! The word *better* is a bit confusing here.

For **the better part** of human history, slavery has been a reality. (The speaker is *not* saying that slavery is good. The speaker is saying that, for most of human history, slavery has existed.)

When the oil magnate died, he left **the better part** of his fortune to his third wife, and only a small sliver to his children.

**Bite the hand that feeds you** – This expression means exactly what it sounds like (think of a mean and not-very-smart dog). Although informal sounding, this expression has appeared in business writing.

The music industry **bites the hand that feeds it** when it penalizes consumers who share (and therefore publicize) their favorite songs with friends.

**Brook** – Tolerate, allow. Often used with the word *no*. You could say *The dictator will not brook dissent*, but a more common usage would be *The dictator will brook no dissent*.

**(Verb) by so (verb)ing** – The second verb is equivalent to or causes the first verb. He *defaults by so refusing* means *when he refuses, he is defaulting* (that is, neglecting to fulfill the duties of a contract). *By so agreeing* also occurs on its own, meaning *by agreeing to do the thing that was just mentioned*.

He agreed to run as the Green Party candidate though he already holds a Democratic Party chairmanship, which he effectively **abandoned by so agreeing**.

**The case at issue** – The matter at hand, the thing we are discussing.

Usually, raising prices results in a drop in demand, but in **the case at issue**, the price jump convinced consumers that the product was a luxury good, thus spurring demand from those who wished to be perceived as wealthy.

**Caught red-handed** – Caught in the act of doing something wrong, so that the person cannot deny guilt. The expression refers to having blood on one's hands.

The company could no longer claim that the fish in the river were all dying from natural causes once it was **caught red-handed** dumping waste at the river's mouth.

**Colored by** – Influenced or prejudiced by.

Her skeptical opinions regarding unbridled capitalism were **colored by** her upbringing in a factory town devastated by outsourcing.

**Couldn't have come at a better time** – The same as *could hardly have come at a better time*, this expression means that something happened at the best possible time, such as at a very convenient moment or just in time to prevent disaster.

**Curry favor** – To try to gain favor (such as preferential treatment from a boss) through flattery or servile behavior. The expression is derived from French and is not related to *curry*, the food.

**Cut bait** – Give up, abandon an activity. Often part of the expression *fish or cut bait*, to *cut bait* is to stop fishing.

As much as he wanted to be an entrepreneur, after a year of struggling, he **cut bait** and asked his former boss for his old job back.

**Due diligence** – Research or analysis done before taking action (such as investing); care that a reasonable person would take to prevent harm to others.

The company was expanding so rapidly that it didn't have time to do its **due diligence**; a number of unexceptional employees were hired as a result.

**En masse** – All together, in a group. This expression is from French and is related to the word *mass*. Like many foreign expressions, *en masse* is often written in italics.

The protesters marched ***en masse*** to the palace.

**Entree** – Admittance, permission to enter. Most people in the United States think of an entree as the main dish of a meal, but it originally was an appetizer—a dish that leads into the main course (the word is related to “enter”). A person who wants to rise in society might seek an *entree* into a certain social group.

For disadvantaged young people, good public schools can provide an ***entree*** into the middle class.

**Fishy** – Suspicious, unlikely, questionable, as in a *fishy* story. This expression probably arose because fish smell very bad when they start to spoil.

**For all X, Y** – This sentence pattern means, “Despite X, actually Y”; that is, X and Y will be opposites, or one will be good and one will be bad. The word “actually” (or a similar word) often appears in this pattern, but doesn’t have to.

**For all** of its well-publicized “green” innovations, the company is one of the worst polluters in the state.

**Former and latter** – When two things are mentioned, the first one is the *former* and the second one is the *latter*.

Your grades are slipping, and you’ve been very secretive about your behavior—it’s **the latter** of these things that worries your father and me the most.

I intend to choose a business school based on reputation and cost, the **former** more so than the **latter**.

**For show** – For appearances only.

The politician's speechifying in regards to eradicating poverty is all **for show**; when he actually had the chance to improve the lot of the poor, he voted against expanding the social safety net.

**For years to come** – Until much later. *The consequences won't affect us for years to come* means that they *will* affect us, but not for the next several years.

My parents are only in their sixties and are healthy and active, so I am hopeful that my children will get to enjoy their grandparents **for years to come**.

**Full throttle** – With much speed and energy. On a related note, sometimes *juice* is used to mean *energy*.

The plan is to go ahead **full throttle** as soon as the money for implementation comes through.

**Garden-variety** – Ordinary, common.

**Gloss over, paper over, whitewash** – These are all expressions for covering up a problem, insult, etc. rather than addressing it or fixing it. Think of a dirty floor that you just put a pretty rug on top of instead of cleaning. Because *gloss* is slippery (think of lip gloss), *gloss over* often has the sense of trying to smoothly and quickly

move on to something else.

The government had been accused of trying to whitewash the scandal, **glossing over** any discussion of the issue in press conference after press conference. The press secretary claimed it was a question of national security, but everyone knew that the president was simply trying to protect his reputation.

**Go down the tubes** – Become much worse, fail. One theory is that this expression is about the plumbing attached to toilets.

**Go sour** – Think of milk going bad—that's the idea behind the expression *go sour*. A relationship *goes sour* before the couple breaks up. An economy *gone sour* can't be good. This is not the same as the expression *sour grapes*, which refers to pretending something you can't have wasn't any good anyway, as in, *Her hatred of the rich is just sour grapes—if she could afford luxury, she'd take all she could get.*

**Hand-wringing** – An excessive expression of concern, guilt, or distress.

There has been much **hand-wringing** (or **wringing of hands**) over falling test scores, but the rising costs of a college degree are far more worrying in terms of America's continuing relevance in the global economy.

**Hold the line** vs. **toe the line** – *Hold the line* means *keep something the same*. It is a reference to (American) football, in which you don't want the opponent to get the ball past the line of scrimmage in the middle of the field. To *toe the line* is to conform to a policy or way of thinking, or follow the rules. One theory about the origin

of the expression is that, on ships, barefoot sailors were made to line up for inspection—that is, to put their toes on an actual line on the deck of the ship.

My boss doesn't want to hear original ideas at all—he just wants me to **toe the line**.

If colleges cannot **hold the line** on rising tuition costs, students will have to take on even more crippling loan burdens.

**However much, as much as** – Even though, no matter how much.

**However much** people may agree that saving money is a virtue, the majority of Americans don't have sufficient funds for any kind of emergency.

**As much as** I'd like to attend your wedding, I just can't afford a trip to Taiwan.

**In contrast to** – This phrase is important in inference questions on Reading Comp. If a writer says *In contrast to X, Y is A*, you can draw the conclusion that *X is not A*. For instance:

*In contrast to our competitor's product, our product is made with organic materials.* (This means that our competitor's product is *not* made with organic materials, which very well could be the answer to a question about what we can infer from the passage.)

**Just cause** – Just as an adjective means *justified, legal, fair*. **Just cause** means a legally

sufficient reason. In some legal codes, an employer must show *just cause* for firing an employee.

**Legions or is legion** – *Legions* are large military units, generally consisting of a few thousand soldiers. Saying that a group is *legion* is saying that it is large.

Surely, the developers could have foreseen that **legions** of Mac users would protest when news emerged that the new version of the software would not be Mac-compatible.

The former governor has been called a demagogue by many commentators who nevertheless must grudgingly admit that her supporters **are legion**, populating rallies in every state.

**“No X or Y” vs. “no X and Y”** – When you are talking about having two things, saying “salt *and* pepper” is very different from saying “salt *or* pepper.” However, when you are talking about a lack of two things, *and* and *or* can often be used to express the same idea. The following two sentences have the same meaning:

Pioneer towns were characterized by little access to the outside world **and** few public institutions.

Pioneer towns had almost no access to the outside world **or** public institutions.

**Not (adjective)** – Of course, putting *not* before an adjective indicates the opposite.

However, sometimes it indicates a softer or more polite way to say something. If someone asks if you like the meal he cooked or the outfit he is wearing, and you know him well enough to be honest, you might say, *It's not my favorite*. Sometimes we say something like *not irrelevant* instead of simply *relevant* in order to indicate that we are correcting someone else's misconception:

Concern about foreign debt is **not misplaced**. (Here, we mean that we should be concerned! We also may be implying that others incorrectly think we should *not* be concerned.)

**Not only X, but also Y** (also appears as **Not only X, but Y**) – This is a two-part expression, introducing the first part before adding on the second, more extreme or surprising part. For instance:

The executive was **not only** fired, **but also** indicted for fraud.

He **not only** bought his girlfriend an iPhone for her birthday, **but also** took her entire family on a vacation to the Catskills.

**Not X, let alone Y** – The meaning is *Not X and definitely not this even more extreme thing, Y*. For instance:

Our remaining funds are **not** enough to get us through the week, **let alone** pay next month's payroll. (Here, getting through the week is less expensive than next month's payroll, so if we can't afford the cheaper thing, we *definitely* can't afford the more expensive thing.)

**No worse than** – Equal to or better than.

Although exotic, this illness is really **no worse than** the common flu.

**On its face** – At first appearance, superficially. If someone says *on its face*, you can expect that later on, the person will give the “real story.” In a Reading Comprehension passage, seeing *on its face* is a good clue that the author’s main idea will probably be the opposite of what *seems* true at first glance.

**On its face**, the donation seems like a selfless act of philanthropy. However, the wealthy donor mainly made the donation for the tax benefits.

**Only looks (adjective)** – Appears (some certain way) but isn’t really.

She **only looks** homeless—she is actually a famous and wealthy artist who lives eccentrically.

**On par with** – Sometimes *on a par with*, this expression comes from golf and means *about equal to* or *equivalent to*.

**Opening salvo** – A *salvo* is a simultaneous discharge of gunfire or release of bombs. Metaphorically, an *opening salvo* is something that starts a fight.

The introduction of Bill H.R. 2, given the inflammatory name “Repealing the Job-Killing Health Care Law Act,” was seen by some as an **opening salvo** by the Republicans.

**Outside of the home** – Working *outside of the home* means having a regular job, such as in an office. However, working *out of your home* is actually working at home. If that's hard to understand, think of the expression *living out of your car*, which actually means living *in* your car—the idea is that you leave the car to go "out" but return back to the car as your base, just as someone who works *out of her home* leaves the home to go to meetings, for example, but uses the home as a central point.

The study compared incomes of women who had worked **outside of the home** to incomes of women who worked **out of their homes** as freelancers or owners of small businesses.

**Per se** – In itself, by itself, intrinsically. From Latin, often written in italics. *Per se* is often used to indicate that while X isn't *naturally* or *the same as* Y, it still has the same effect as Y.

The policy isn't sexist, **per se**, but it has had a disproportionate impact on women that deserves further study.

**Press for** – Argue in favor of. Think of *pushing people* towards what you want them to do.

The advocates **pressed for** greater regulation of child-care providers.

**Rabid** – Rabies is a disease that some animals (dogs, raccoons, etc.) contract and that causes the animal to become insane and violent. Thus, we use *rabid* (having rabies) metaphorically to mean *zealous* or *excessively* or *angrily passionate*. One

symptom of rabies is *foaming at the mouth*, which is also an expression for being extremely (and violently or irrationally) angry.

One debater called himself a “peace activist” and his opponent a “**rabid** right-wing gun nut.” His opponent called himself a “champion of the American way” and his opponent a “**rabid** anti-American zealot.”

**Ranks of** – The people in a group other than the leaders. Many people know the word *rank* as “a level or grade,” as in *A general has a higher rank than a sergeant*. The other use of *ranks* is also originally related to the military: the *ranks* or sometimes the *rank and file* means all the regular soldiers (not the officers).

Among the **ranks** of our alumni are two senators and many famous authors.

**Reap** and **sow** – These are metaphors related to farming, and specifically the idea that the seeds that you plant (or *sow*) determine what you will later harvest (or *reap*). *Sow* is pronounced the same as *so*, and the past tense is *sown*, as in *Having sown the love of knowledge in the minds of children, the teacher's influence extended well past her own lifetime*. A common expression is *You reap what you sow*.

He worked night and day in the strange new country, never stopping to rest, for he knew he would **reap** his reward when his family greeted him as a hero for all the money he had sent back home.

**Red flag** – Warning sign or something alarming.

Bernie Madoff's sustained, ultrahigh returns should have been a **red flag** for the banks with which he did business.

**Red herring** – Something irrelevant that distracts from the real issue. A herring is a fish. One theory for the origin of the expression is that criminals trying to escape the police would sometimes rub a smelly fish across their trail as they ran away in order to mislead the dogs used to track them down.

When the company was robbed, police immediately suspected Johnson, who purchased a brand-new Maserati just after the crime was committed. This turned out to be a **red herring**, however, as it was Johnson's wife, who'd just come into a large inheritance, who bought the car.

**Reign** vs. **reins** – Reign means “rule (noun),” as in *Conditions have improved under the king's reign*. Reins are leather straps used by a rider to control a horse. Both words are often used metaphorically.

People were worried when the inexperienced new CEO took the **reins** of the multinational corporation, but under her **reign**, profits soared.

**(Adjective)-ridden** – Dominated, burdened, or afflicted by (adjective). In a *disease-ridden slum*, it's pretty obvious that the meaning is bad, but actually, adding *-ridden* to anything makes the meaning bad. If someone said *an equality-ridden society*, that person is actually against equality! *Ridden* can also be used alone, as in *The neighborhood was ridden with crime*.

**Scarcely** or **Scarce** – Sometimes *scarce* is used where it sounds like the adverb

*scarcely* is needed. This is an idiomatic usage:

She lived a lavish lifestyle she could **scarce** afford. (She could not afford the lifestyle.)

**Save** – But or except. As a verb, of course, *save* means *keep safe, store up, set aside*. But as a preposition or conjunction, *save* can be used as follows:

All of the divisions of the company are profitable **save** the movie-rental division.

(This means that the movie-rental division was not profitable.)

He would have been elected president, **save** for the scandal that derailed his campaign at the last minute.

(Here, *save* means “if not.”)

**School of thought** – A group of people with similar beliefs or perspective on things, or the beliefs themselves. If a GRE writer says *One school of thought argues X*, it is probably the case that the author is about to say the opposite (calling something a *school of thought* can emphasize that it's not the only way to think about the issue).

One **school of thought** says that companies don't need to “give back” directly to communities, because their economic activity causes money to “trickle down” to everyone through taxes; a competing **school of thought** says that companies benefit from a nation's infrastructure and education system, which confers an ethical obligation to be philanthropic.

**Sight** vs. **site** vs. **cite** – To **sight** is to see, or discover by looking. A **site** is a location. To **cite** is to reference or give credit to.

The sailors had nearly given up hope when they finally **sighted** land. When they reached the shore, they planted a flag on the **site** of their landing.

A good research report **cites** relevant studies.

**So much as** – This phrase is used an adverbial intensifier. In *My teacher is so awful, she won't so much as answer a question*, the meaning is that, whatever the teacher will do, it is not “as much as” answering a question—it is something less than that. It can also be used as a synonym for *but rather*.

After her husband decided to take up day trading and lost \$100,000 in one day, she wouldn't **so much as** look at him.

She's not an iconoclast **so much as** an attention-hound; she'd do anything for the spotlight.

**Sound the depths** – Explore, investigate, or look into something really deeply. This expression is a metaphor based on the idea of a “sounding line,” which is a rope with a weight on the bottom that you drop to the ocean floor to see how deep the ocean is.

Other books have dealt with the topic in a superficial way, but this is the first book to really **sound the depths** of the response of the British lower class to the American Revolution.

**Steeped in** – Immersed in, saturated with. A teabag **steeps** in hot water. A person **steeped in** classic literature really knows a lot about old, famous books.

The Met's new youth-targeted campaign seeks to answer the question of whether music lovers **steeped in** hip-hop and pop can learn to love opera.

**Stem from** – Be caused by. This is related to the idea of a plant's *stem*.

The psychologist believed that his neurosis **stemmed from** events in his childhood.

**Hold sway over** – Have great power or influence over a person, group of people, or place.

Repressive governments are suspicious of those who **hold sway over** the people, and often imprison or execute such people.

**Table** – In American English, to *table* something means to postpone discussion of it until later. (In British English, to *table* a bill is the opposite—to submit it for consideration.)

**Take umbrage** – Become offended.

With 15 years of experience on all kinds of campaigns, she **took umbrage** of her sexist coworker's suggestion that she was only qualified to develop advertising for "women's products."

**The very idea** (or *the very notion*, etc.) – This expression is used to express a strong contrast.

The author conjures up a drifting yet haunting word picture that challenges **one's very notion** of what constitutes a story. (This means that the author's strange “word picture” story goes against the most basic things that we think must be true about stories.)

**Trappings** – Accessories, the characteristic items, products, etc. that come with or are associated with something. Think of the side dishes or condiments that come with a meal. The *trappings* of fame include invites to fancy parties and free items from companies.

**Vanguard** and **avant-garde** – The *avant-garde* (French for *in front of the guard*) were the leading soldiers at the front of an army. *Vanguard* is derived from *avant-garde* and means the same thing.

Metaphorically, the *avant-garde* (noun or adjective) or *vanguard* (noun) are innovators, those at the forefront of any movement or those “ahead of their time.” Sometimes, the *avant-garde* seems a little crazy or scary at first.

While Google has won the search engine wars, in 1994 Yahoo was on the **vanguard** of search technology.

She arrived at the mixer in a dress that was a little **avant-garde** for the otherwise conservative Yale Club—she would have looked more appropriate at an art gallery or Lady Gaga concert.

**Wanting** – Wanting means lacking, insufficient, or not good enough (as in, *I read the book and found it wanting*). This makes sense when you think about a person who is *left wanting*—that is, the person is *left wanting* something good. Conversely, a person who *wants for nothing* is someone who already has everything.

**With a grain of salt** – To take something (a statement, claim, etc.) *with a grain of salt* is to maintain a small amount of skepticism. The origin of this expression is related to an old belief that a small amount of salt could help protect against poison.

Take the consultant's advice **with a grain of salt**—the software he's recommending is produced by a company that is also a client of his.

**With respect to, in some respects** – These expressions are not really about giving respect. *With respect to* (or *in respect to*) just means *about*. The expression *in some respects* just means *in some ways*.

**With respect to** your request for a raise, I'm afraid no one is getting one this year.

**Wreak havoc** – Cause destruction. The past tense of *wreak* is *wrought*.

Unsurprisingly, a combination of heroin abuse and living on the streets can really **wreak havoc** on a person's health.

## **Drill: Decoding Idioms**

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Each sentence below is written in American English that is idiomatic, but still appropriate for academic writing. Pick the multiple-choice answer that best expresses the meaning of the original sentence.

Complete this quiz “open book”—feel free to go back and look up anything you want in this book, and to use any online dictionary (such as [dictionary.com](http://dictionary.com)). You will gain much more from the process of looking things up and decoding the statements than you would by merely testing yourself in the usual manner.

1. In contrast to the Swedish social welfare system, Ireland's does not provide paid paternity leave.
  1. Ireland's social welfare system does not provide paid paternity leave and Sweden's does.
  2. The Swedish and Irish social welfare systems are different in many ways, and Ireland's does not provide paid paternity leave.
  3. Both the Swedish and Irish social welfare systems provide paid paternity leave.
2. He can hardly be called a liberal, for his voting record belies the beliefs he professes to hold.

1. He is not really a liberal because he votes in a way that goes against liberalism.
2. He is a very strong liberal and always supports liberal beliefs with his vote.
3. He is slightly liberal, and his voting record goes along with his beliefs.
3. However much the committee may be deadlocked now, the progress made to this point has been nontrivial.
  1. The committee is now committed to one course of action and is making progress.
  2. The committee members are fighting with one another, but have made progress on one point they were discussing.
  3. Although it is true that the committee is stuck and not moving forward, it has already made significant progress.
  4. Although the book has addressed the issue of educational equity head on, it has sidestepped the thorny question of school vouchers.
    1. The book talked about owning stock in education, but it has talked in an indirect way about the painful issue of school vouchers.

2. The book talked directly about equality in education, but it avoided talking about the controversial issue of school vouchers.
  3. The book talked in a smart way about fairness in education, but it only gave an overview of the controversial issue of school vouchers.
5. Her appointment to the office is all but assured.
1. She has a meeting at the office, but the time is not set.
  2. She will almost certainly be given a new job or leadership role.
  3. She may be promoted, but it is not likely.
6. You discount the consultant's prescription at your peril.
1. You put yourself in danger by dismissing the consultant's recommendations.
  2. Paying less for the consultant's advice is not a wise idea.
  3. You have gotten a good deal on a dangerous medicine.
7. Davis seemingly spearheaded the project and has taken credit for its success. Nonetheless, those in the know are aware of his patent appropriation of the ideas of others.

1. Davis seems to have led the project, and he took credit for it. However, those who know the real situation know that he openly stole other people's ideas.
  2. Davis was the leader of the project and got the credit, and those who know about what happened know that he used the intellectual property of other people in an appropriate way.
  3. Davis seems to have damaged the project, though he took credit for its success. However, those who know the real situation know that he used other people's ideas.
8. The experiment only looks like a success.
1. It is not possible to see the experiment as anything but a success.
  2. The experiment seems successful, but we don't know for sure.
  3. The experiment has the appearance of a success, but really is a failure.
9. On its face, the dispute is over how the groundbreaking study should be attributed when published. But in actuality, the scientists are arguing because their leader will brook no opposition to his own perspective on their findings.
1. The dispute is directly about who should get credit for the study. But really,

the lead scientist will not “go with the flow” of opposition to his own theories.

2. The dispute at first seems to be about the study's attribution. But really, the lead scientist will not tolerate opposition to his own theories.
  3. The dispute is directly about who could get credit for the study. But really, the lead scientist will not encourage opposition to his own theories.
10. We will not likely reconcile the apparent discrepancy for years to come.
1. It will probably take us many years to show that what looks like a contradiction really isn't.
  2. We do not want to work out a difference of opinion in the coming years.
  3. Over the next several years, we will probably not attempt to work out what seems like an error.
11. The dictator had tyranized his people for too long. As dissident thinkers began to sway public opinion, the country's increasingly marginalized leader reaped the bitter fruits of his cruel reign.
1. The dictator was disabused of his tyranny, and as rebellious thinkers began

to have political power, their tyrannical leader was pushed to the margins.

2. The dictator had been cruel to his people, and as thinkers who disagreed with the government began to influence regular people, the regime lost influence and power.
  3. The dictator had abused his people, and as thinkers whose ideas went against the government began to influence people, agricultural exports became bitter and expensive.
12. A variable-rate mortgage is no worse in this respect than a fixed-rate one.
1. There is something bad about a fixed-rate mortgage, and that same quality is better or equally bad in a variable-rate mortgage.
  2. A variable-rate mortgage does not indicate less respect than a fixed-rate mortgage.
  3. If you look at it a certain way, a variable-rate mortgage is the same or better than a fixed-rate one.
13. As to whether Dr. Stuttgart is a token academic on a board of otherwise mercenary executives, you need look only at the board's response to the latest crisis, when Dr. Stuttgart was at once turned to for counsel and granted discretionary power over the board's funds.

1. If there is a question about whether the main reason Dr. Stuttgart is on the board is so the executives who only care about money can look good, then the only way to answer that question is to look at the board's response to the latest crisis, when Dr. Stuttgart was put in charge and given power over the board's money.
  2. If you want to know whether Dr. Stuttgart is really an academic even though he is on a board of executives who will do anything to win, then the best place to look for an answer is at the board's response to the latest crisis, when Dr. Stuttgart was asked for his advice and allowed to secretly control the board's money.
  3. If you are questioning whether the main reason Dr. Stuttgart is on the board is so the executives who only care about money can look good, then you can easily answer that question by looking at the board's response to the latest crisis, when the board asked for Dr. Stuttgart's advice while at the same time giving him power to spend the board's money on whatever he thought was best.
14. The author is seemingly a garden-variety Marxist.
1. The author seems to be a Marxist who has a lot of diversity in his or her opinions.
  2. The author is a Marxist who is concerned with many different Marxist issues.

3. It seems as though the author is a typical Marxist, but that may not really be true.
15. The windfall could hardly have come at a better time: by agreeing to a company restructuring he didn't really understand, he had just inadvertently reduced his holdings in the family business.
1. The disaster happened at a very bad time, because he had also just agreed to a company reorganization that he didn't understand and that improperly reduced his control over the family business.
  2. He suddenly received some money at a very convenient time, because he had just agreed to a company reorganization that he didn't understand and thus had accidentally reduced how much of the family business he owned.
  3. The good fortune could have happened at a better time, because he had also just agreed to a company reorganization that he didn't understand and that reduced his portion of the family business.
16. Which of the following, if true, best reconciles the apparent discrepancy?
1. Which of the following is true and shows that a contradiction does not really exist?
  2. Which of the following, if it happened to be true, would show that what

looks like a contradiction really isn't?

3. Which of the following, if it happened to be true, would help us accept a contradiction?

17. The evidence has been taken as supporting Fujimura's conclusion.

1. Other people have interpreted the evidence in a way that makes it seem to support Fujimura's conclusion.
2. The evidence definitely supports Fujimura's conclusion.
3. The evidence has been deeply understood by others in a way that allows them to effectively support Fujimura's conclusion.

18. Hardly an atypical example, this shifty, hedging, practically unreadable document is paradigmatic of corporate memos.

1. This memo switches positions often, holds back information, and is very hard to read. It is a very poor example of corporate memos.
2. Although this memo refuses to take a stand, tries to reduce the writer's risk, and is very hard to read, it is a poor example of corporate memos and should not be judged to be representative.

3. This memo is evasive or tricky, avoids taking a stand so as not to risk being wrong or offensive, and is almost unreadable. However, this is pretty standard for a corporate memo.
19. Which of the following best underscores the argument that a failure to enforce the regulation is on par with publicly condoning illegal dumping?
1. Which of the following most weakens the argument that a failure to enforce the regulation is just as bad as publicly tolerating illegal dumping?
  2. Which of the following most strengthens the argument that a failure to enforce the regulation is just as bad as publicly tolerating illegal dumping?
  3. Which of the following most emphasizes the argument that a failure to enforce the regulation is worse than publicly tolerating illegal dumping?
20. The central idea is juxtaposed with the results of a study that seemingly corroborates a long-derided school of thought.
1. The central idea is placed next to and contrasted with evidence that seems to support the ideas of a group of people whose ideas have been looked down on or made fun of for a long time.
  2. The central idea is judged to be better than evidence that seems to support the ideas of a group of people whose ideas have been looked down on or

made fun of for a long time.

3. The central idea is placed next to and contrasted with evidence that supports the ideas of a group of people whose ideas used to be looked down on or made fun of.

### ***Solutions: Decoding Idioms***

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1. (A)

2. (A)

3. (C)

4. (B)

5. (B)

6. (A)

7. (A)

8. (C)

9. (B)

10. (A)

11. (B)

12. (A)

13. (C)

14. (C)

15. (B)

16. (B)

17. (A)

18. (C)

19. (B)

20. (A)

*Appendix A*  
*of*

TEXT COMPLETION & SENTENCE EQUIVALENCE

*Roots List*

## *In This Chapter...*

*[Roots List](#)*

## ROOTS LIST

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Many words in English, especially those that come from Latin or Greek, have more than one “part.” Here is the basic pattern:

Word = Prefix + Root + Suffix

*EXCISION* = EX + CIS + ION

The root contains the original core meaning of the word, although this meaning may have changed over time. Here, the root *cis* means “cut.”

The prefix alters that meaning in some way. Here, the prefix *ex-* means “out” or “away.”

Together, the prefix and the root handle most of the meaning: *ex + cis* = excise, or “cut away.”

Finally, the suffix determines the part of speech. The suffix *-ion* means “the action of doing X,” so *excision* means “the act of cutting away.”

Be careful! Many words do not break down so cleanly. Also, roots can be misleading. The original meaning of a word may have only been related in a *metaphorical* sense to the meaning of its original parts. Moreover, over time, many words drift very far from their original, etymological meaning (some words transform so much that they come to mean the *opposite* of their original meaning).

Study roots, prefixes, and suffixes primarily to solidify your vocabulary. On the test, you can and should use your root knowledge to guess at the meaning of unknown words. Realize, however, that roots are most helpful *now*, while you're studying—not the day of the test. Be sure to learn the full dictionary meanings of vocabulary words.

### Part I: Roots

This list includes a broad selection of roots and illustrative examples that often appear on the GRE. The examples have been chosen specifically to illustrate the root and thus to avoid meaning drift. Nearly all the roots are Latin or Greek. This list is not exhaustive; it is meant to provide a useful reference.

The definitions given for the harder words are brief. Remember to consult your dictionary for nuances.

ROOT	MEANING	EXAMPLES
ac	sharp or	acid
acer	point or	acrid = sharp, bitter (of smell or taste)
aci	high	acerbity = bitterness
acro		acrimony = sharpness of words, behavior, or feeling acme = highest point, best level acrophobia = “high + fear” = fear of heights acumen = sharpness of intellect
ag	drive or	agent, act

<b>act</b>	lead or do	demagogue = “people + lead” = leader who appeals (falsely) to the people <b>react</b> = do in response
<b>alt</b>	high	altitude, altimeter <b>exalted</b> = “out + high” = raised high
<b>ambul</b>	walk	circum <b>ambulate</b> = “around + walk” = walk around in a circle <b>perambulator</b> = “around + walk” = baby carriage
<b>anim</b>	spirit or breath	<b>animate</b> un <b>animous</b> = “one + spirit” = in complete agreement <b>equanimity</b> = “even + spirit” = calmness, balance under stress <b>magnanimity</b> = “great + spirit” = nobility of spirit, generosity <b>pusillanimous</b> = “tiny + spirit” = cowardly, without courage
<b>arch</b>	rule	<b>anarchy</b> = “not + ruler” = chaos, lack of government
<b>aud</b>	hear	<b>audience</b> , <b>audible</b> <b>auditory</b> = related to hearing
<b>bell</b> <b>belli</b>	war	<b>rebellion</b> <b>bellicose</b> = ready to fight, warlike <b>belligerent</b> = “war + do” = hostile, provocative, or actually at war
<b>cad</b>	fall	<b>decadent</b> = “away + fall” = in a state of

<b>cid</b>		decline, often self-indulgent <b>recidivism</b> = “back + fall” = tendency to relapse to earlier behavior or crime
<b>ced</b> <b>cess</b> <b>ceed</b>	go or yield	<b>proceed</b> , <b>succeed</b> , <b>exceed</b> , <b>recede</b> <b>cede</b> = yield <b>antecedent</b> = “before + go” = earlier event or cause <b>precedent</b> = “before + go” = earlier example <b>cessation</b> = end of an action
<b>chron</b>	time	<b>chronological</b> , <b>chronic</b> <b>anachronism</b> = “not + time” = something out of place in time <b>diachronic</b> = “through + time” = relating to change over time
<b>cis</b> <b>cide</b>	cut or kill	<b>incisive</b> = “into + cut” = cutting to the heart of a matter, direct <b>excision</b> = “out + cut” = act of cutting out, removing <b>regicide</b> = “king + kill” = murder of a king
<b>clud</b> <b>clus</b> <b>claus</b>	close	<b>include</b> , <b>exclude</b> , <b>inclusion</b> , <b>claustrophobia</b> <b>preclude</b> = “before + close” = prevent, rule out beforehand <b>occlude</b> = “against + close” = block off or conceal
<b>crat</b> <b>crac</b>	rule	<b>democracy</b> <b>autocratic</b> = “self + ruler” = relating to an

		absolute ruler or tyrant
<b>cred</b> <b>creed</b>	believe	<b>incredible</b> , <b>creed</b> <b>credence</b> = acceptance, trust <b>credulity</b> = readiness to believe, gullibility <b>incredulous</b> = skeptical, unwilling to believe
<b>dei</b>	god	<b>deify</b> = “god + make” = make into a god, glorify
<b>demo</b> <b>dem</b>	people	<b>democracy</b> <b>demographic</b> = related to a population, or a segment of a population <b>pandemic</b> = “all + people” = something affecting everyone, usually a disease <b>endemic</b> = “in + people” = native to a population <b>demagogue</b> = “people + lead” = leader who appeals (falsely) to the people
<b>dict</b>	say	<b>predict</b> , <b>contradict</b> , <b>jurisdiction</b> <b>benediction</b> = “good + say” = blessing <b>valedictory</b> = “farewell + say” = expressing a farewell (often by a speech)
<b>duc</b>	lead or pull	<b>produce</b> , <b>abduct</b> , <b>conduct</b> <b>deduce</b> = “away + lead” = determine from general principles <b>ductile</b> = able to be led easily (people) or to be drawn out into wire (metals) <b>induct</b> = “in + lead” = admit as a member
<b>dur, dure</b>	hard or	<b>durable</b> , <b>endure</b> , <b>endurance</b> , <b>duration</b> ,

	lasting	<b>during</b> <b>duress</b> = compulsion, restraint by force <b>obdurrate</b> = “against + hard” = hard of heart, stubborn
<b>equi</b> <b>equa</b>	equal or even	<b>equation</b> , <b>equator</b> <b>equitable</b> = dealing fairly on all sides <b>equanimity</b> = “even + spirit” = calmness under stress, balance <b>equivocate</b> = “equal + voice” = say something open to more than one interpretation in order to mislead or to avoid commitment <b>equable</b> = uniform, steady, unchanging
<b>fac</b> <b>fec</b> <b>fic</b> <b>fy</b>	do or make	<b>terrify</b> , <b>purify</b> , <b>pacify</b> , <b>affect</b> , <b>effect</b> , <b>fact</b> , <b>artificial</b> <b>rarefy</b> = “rare + make” = make thin, pure, less dense <b>verify</b> = “true + make” = confirm as true <b>sanctify</b> = “holy + make” = make holy <b>deify</b> = “god + make” = make into a god, glorify <b>beneficent</b> = “good + do” = doing good for others <b>maleficent</b> = “bad + do” = doing harm or evil <b>facile</b> = easily done or understood, lacking depth or authenticity <b>facilitate</b> = to make easy, help to happen <b>factitious</b> = artificial, made-up, fake

<b>fer</b>	carry or bring	transfer, offer, fertile, ferry proliferate = “offspring + carry” = multiply in number vociferous = “voice + carry” = shouting loudly and angrily
<b>ferv</b>	boil	fervent = zealous, intense in feeling effervescent = “away + boil” = being bubbly, showing exhilaration perfervid = “through + boil” = overexcited, overwrought
<b>fid</b>	trust or faith	fidelity, confidence diffidence = “not + faith” = hesitant, lacking in self-confidence perfidious = “detrimental + faith” = disloyal, treacherous
<b>flect</b> <b>flex</b>	bend	flexible, reflect, deflect
<b>flu</b> <b>flux</b> <b>fluct</b>	flow or wave	fluid, fluctuate, influx confluence = “together + flow” = a flowing together superfluous = “over + flow” = unnecessary, wasteful mellifluous = “honey + flow” = having a smooth flow like honey effluvium = “out + flow” = by-product, (bad) exhalation
<b>gen</b>	kin or kind or	gentry = upper class gentility = high social status, or conduct

	birth	becoming of that status <b>heterogeneous</b> = “different + kind” = consisting of diverse parts <b>homogeneous</b> = “same + kind” = consisting of one substance
<b>gno</b>	know	<b>agnostic</b> = “not + know” = someone who isn’t sure (often about God’s existence) <b>diagnosis</b> = “through + know” = identification of (medical) causes & issues <b>prognosticate</b> = “before + know” = predict, foretell <b>cognoscente</b> (pl. cognoscenti) = “with + know” = expert in a subject
<b>graph</b> <b>gram</b>	write	<b>autograph</b> , <b>diagram</b> , <b>grammar</b> , <b>graphic</b> , <b>telegram</b> <b>monograph</b> = “one + write” = a written report or paper on a narrow subject
<b>grade</b> <b>gress</b>	step or go	<b>progress</b> , <b>regress</b> , <b>aggressive</b> , <b>congress</b> <b>retrograde</b> = “backward + go” = moving backward <b>transgression</b> = “across + step” = violation of a law or rule <b>digress</b> = “away + go” = deviate from a subject
<b>greg</b>	flock or herd	<b>aggregate</b> = “toward + flock” = collect or add up <b>congregate</b> = “together + flock” = gather

		<p>together</p> <p><b>egregious</b> = “outside + flock” = conspicuously bad, flagrant</p> <p><b>gregarious</b> = sociable, companionable</p>
<b>her</b> <b>hes</b>	stick	<p><b>adhere</b> = “to + stick” = stick to</p> <p><b>cohesive</b> = “together + stick” = sticking or fitting together</p>
<b>jac</b> <b>ject</b>	throw	<p><b>eject</b>, <b>trajectory</b>, <b>interject</b>, <b>objection</b>, <b>reject</b></p> <p><b>abject</b> = “away + thrown” = extremely bad</p>
<b>jur</b>	law <i>or</i> swear	<p><b>jury</b>, <b>jurisdiction</b></p> <p><b>abjure</b> = “away + swear” = renounce or reject</p> <p><b>adjure</b> = “toward + swear” = command, urge</p>
<b>leg</b> <b>lex</b> <b>lect</b> <b>log</b>	word <i>or</i> speak <i>or</i> read <i>or</i> study	<p><b>lecture</b>, <b>monologue</b>, <b>chronological</b>, <b>lexicon</b></p> <p><b>neologism</b> = “new + word” = new word or expression</p> <p><b>eulogy</b> = speech of praise (often after death)</p>
<b>locu</b> <b>loqu</b>	speak	<p><b>circumlocution</b> = “around + speak” = wordiness or evasion in speech</p> <p><b>eloquence</b> = “out + speak” = art of speaking well in public</p> <p><b>loquacious</b> = very talkative</p>
<b>luc</b> <b>lus</b>	light <i>or</i> shine <i>or</i>	<p><b>lucid</b> = clear, sane, full of <b>light</b></p> <p><b>elucidate</b> = “out + shine” = make clear,</p>

	clear	explain <b>translucent</b> = “through + shine” = permitting (some) passage of light <b>pellucid</b> = “through + clear” = absolutely clear <b>lackluster</b> = dull, lacking brilliance
<b>meter</b> <b>metr</b>	measure	<b>metric</b> , <b>altimeter</b> , <b>perimeter</b>
<b>mit</b> <b>miss</b>	send	<b>dismiss</b> , <b>emit</b> , <b>transmit</b> <b>missive</b> = letter, written message <b>remiss</b> = “back + sent” = negligent, careless, lax
<b>morph</b>	shape	<b>amorphous</b> = “without + shape” = shapeless <b>metamorphose</b> = “change + shape” = transform
<b>nom</b>	name	<b>nominate</b> = appoint to a position <b>pseudonym</b> = “false + name” = a fake name used by an author
<b>path</b>	feeling	<b>antipathy</b> = “against + feeling” = strong dislike <b>pathetic</b> = arousing pity
<b>pel</b> <b>puls</b>	drive or push	<b>expel</b> , <b>propel</b> <b>dispel</b> = “away + drive” = scatter, make vanish <b>compelling</b> = “together + drive” = convincing, forceful, attention-grabbing

<b>phob</b>	fear	acrophobia = “high + fear” = fear of heights
<b>phon</b>	sound	<p><b>megaphone</b>, <b>telephone</b>, <b>phonics</b></p> <p><b>homophone</b> = “same + sound” = a word pronounced like another word</p> <p><b>cacophonous</b> = “bad + sound” = unpleasant sounding</p> <p><b>euphony</b> = “good + sound” = pleasing sound (usually of words)</p>
<b>port</b>	carry	<b>porter</b> , <b>transportation</b> , <b>import</b> , <b>export</b> , <b>deport</b>
<b>pos</b> <b>pon</b>	put	<p><b>impose</b>, <b>expose</b>, <b>oppose</b>, <b>opponent</b>, <b>proponent</b></p> <p><b>depose</b> = “down + put” = remove a leader, or take testimony</p> <p><b>superimpose</b> = “over + on + put” = place over</p>
<b>prob</b> <b>prov</b>	prove or test	<p><b>probe</b>, <b>prove</b>, <b>improve</b>, <b>approve</b></p> <p><b>probity</b> = honesty, integrity</p> <p><b>reprove</b> = “back + prove” = scold, admonish, express disapproval</p>
<b>rog</b>	ask	<p><b>interrogation</b>, <b>interrogatory</b></p> <p><b>prerogative</b> = “before + ask” = special right</p> <p><b>arrogate</b> = “toward + ask” = claim or take (without the right)</p> <p><b>abrogate</b> = “away + ask” = abolish, nullify (a law or rule)</p>

<b>tract</b>	drag or draw or pull	<b>tractor, attract, contract, detract, extract, retract</b>  <b>tractable</b> = able to be led, obedient, easily managed  <b>abstracted</b> = “away + drawn” = withdrawn into one's mind
<b>trud trus</b>	push or thrust	<b>intrude, extrude</b>  <b>unobtrusive</b> = “not + against + push” = not noticeable or attention-drawing  <b>abtruse</b> = “away + push” = hard to comprehend
<b>veh vect</b>	carry	<b>vehicle, convection, vector</b>  <b>invective</b> = “in + carry” = bitter criticism, denunciation  <b>vehement</b> = “carried (away) + mind” = passionate, nearly violent
<b>ven vent</b>	come	<b>intervene, prevent, invent, event, adventure, venture</b>  <b>provenance</b> = “forward + come” = source, or history of ownership  <b>contravene</b> = “against + come” = oppose, violate, or contradict
<b>ver</b>	true	<b>verify</b> = “true + make” = confirm as true  <b>veracity</b> = truthfulness or truth  <b>aver</b> = “toward + true” = assert, declare
<b>vert vers</b>	turn	<b>revert, extrovert, introvert, adverse, inadvertent, aversion, avert, invert</b>  <b>versatile</b> = able to adapt easily, ready for

		<p>many uses</p> <p><b>divert</b> = “away + turn” = turn aside or distract</p> <p><b>controvert</b> = “against + turn” = dispute in argument, engage in <b>controversy</b></p>
<b>voc</b>	voice or call	<p><b>vocal</b>, <b>invocation</b></p> <p><b>equivocate</b> = “equal + voice” = say something open to more than one interpretation in order to mislead or to avoid commitment</p> <p><b>vociferous</b> = “voice + carry” = shouting loudly and angrily</p>
<b>vol</b>	will	<p><b>benevolence</b> = “good + will” = kindness, readiness to do good for others</p> <p><b>malevolent</b> = “bad + will” = wishing harm, ready to do evil</p> <p><b>voluntary</b> = done of one's own free will</p>

## Part II: Prefixes

You must be even more careful with prefixes than with roots. Certain prefixes have relatively stable meanings (e.g., *bene-* pretty much always means “good”), but other prefixes, especially short ones that correspond to prepositions, can take on a variety of different meanings. The sense of the whole word is often unpredictable. Take a simple word: *describe* = “from + write.” It is not obvious how the particular meaning of *describe* originates from the combination of the prefix *de-* and the root *scrib*.

Even if the meanings of the prefix and the root remain stable, the word itself may still take an unpredictable turn. For instance, *polygraph* = “many + write”. How we would work out from the roots that a *polygraph* is a “lie-detector test” (which writes down lots of physiological data at once) is anyone's guess. Do not simply rely on knowing the prefix and the root separately—always learn the modern English meaning of the word itself.

Most of the examples in the following list can also be found in the roots list, so that you can see both the root and the prefix in action and reinforce the word in your memory.

PREFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES
a-	not or	atheist = “not + god” = someone who
an-	without	doesn't believe in God
ana-		agnostic = “not + know” = someone who isn't sure (often about God's existence) <b>anarchy</b> = “not + ruler” = chaos, lack

		<p>of government</p> <p><b>anachronism</b> = “not + time” = something out of place in time</p> <p><b>amorphous</b> = “without + shape” = shapeless</p>
<b>ab-</b> <b>abs-</b>	away from	<p><b>abnormal</b>, <b>absent</b>, <b>abduct</b></p> <p><b>abstain</b> = “away + hold” = refrain from</p> <p><b>abstracted</b> = “away + drawn” = withdrawn into one's mind</p> <p><b>abjure</b> = “away + swear” = renounce or reject</p> <p><b>abject</b> = “away + thrown” = in a low, hopeless, depressed condition</p> <p><b>abrogate</b> = “away + propose law” = abolish, nullify (a law or rule)</p> <p><b>abstruse</b> = “away + push” = hard to comprehend</p> <p><b>abstemious</b> = “away + liquor” = moderate in appetite or drinking</p>
<b>ad-</b> <b>can drop d and double next letter</b> <b>ac-, ag-, as- at- etc.</b>	to or toward	<p><b>adhere</b> = “to + stick” = stick to</p> <p><b>adjure</b> = “toward + swear” = command, urge</p> <p><b>accrete</b> = “toward + grow” = grow or pile up bit by bit</p> <p><b>aggregate</b> = “toward + flock” = collect together</p> <p><b>assimilate</b> = “toward + similar” = make or become a similar part of something</p> <p><b>arrogate</b> = “toward + ask” = claim or</p>

		<p>convincing, forceful, attention-grabbing</p> <p><b>confluence</b> = “together + flow” = a flowing together</p> <p><b>cognoscente</b> (pl. cognoscenti) = “with + know” = expert in a subject</p>
<b>contra-</b> <b>contro-</b> <b>counter-</b>	against	<p><b>contradict</b></p> <p><b>contraband</b> = “against + command” = illegal goods</p> <p><b>countervail</b> = “against + worth” = compensate for, counteract, oppose</p> <p><b>contravene</b> = “against + come” = oppose, violate, contradict</p> <p><b>controvert</b> = “against + turn” = dispute in argument, engage in controversy</p>
<b>de-</b>	from or away or down	<p><b>defame</b>, <b>deodorize</b>, <b>deflect</b>, detract</p> <p><b>deduce</b> = “away + lead” = determine from general principles</p> <p><b>decadent</b> = “away + fall” = in a state of decline, often self-indulgent</p> <p><b>derivative</b> = “away + stream” = originating from something else, lacking originality</p> <p><b>depose</b> = “down + put” = remove a leader, or take testimony</p>
<b>di-</b> <b>dia-</b>	two or through or across or	<p><b>diameter</b>, <b>diagonal</b></p> <p><b>dichotomy</b> = division into two opposing parts</p>

	between	<b>diagnosis</b> = “through + know” = identification of (medical) causes & issues <b>diachronic</b> = “through + time” = relating to change over time
dis- dys- di-	away or not or bad	<b>disallow</b> , <b>disrespect</b> , <b>dismiss</b> , <b>disillusion</b> , <b>divide</b> <b>dispel</b> = “away + drive” = scatter, make vanish <b>divert</b> = “away + turn” = turn aside or distract <b>dissonance</b> = “bad + sound” = discord, clash of sounds <b>distend</b> = “away + stretch” = bloat, swell, expand <b>diffidence</b> = “not + faith” = hesitant, lacking in self-confidence <b>digress</b> = “away + go” = deviate from subject <b>dystopia</b> = “bad” + utopia (future/imaginary world)
duo-	two	<b>duopoly</b> = “two + sell” = condition in which there are only two sellers
en-	in	<b>endemic</b> = “in + people” = native to a population
eu-	good	<b>eulogize</b> = “good + speak” = praise highly (often after death) <b>euphony</b> = “good + sound” = pleasing

		sound (usually of words)
<b>ex-</b> <b>e-</b> <b>ef-</b>	out or away or from	emit, <b>expel</b> , <b>exceed</b> , <b>exit</b> , <b>eject</b> , <b>export</b> <b>exalted</b> = “out + high” = raised high <b>excision</b> = “out + cut” = act of cutting out, removing <b>eloquence</b> = “out + speak” = art of speaking well in public <b>egregious</b> = “outside + flock” = conspicuously bad, flagrant <b>elucidate</b> = “out + shine” = make clear, explain <b>effluvia</b> = “out + flow” = by-product, exhalation (often bad)
<b>exter-</b> <b>extra-</b> <b>extr-</b>	outside of	<b>exterior</b> , <b>extreme</b> <b>extracurricular</b> = “outside + course” = an activity pursued at school outside of normal course studies <b>extrinsic</b> = “outside + follow” = external to something's nature
<b>hetero-</b>	other or different	<b>heterogeneous</b> = “different + kind” = consisting of diverse parts
<b>homo-</b>	same	<b>homophone</b> = “same + sound” = a word pronounced like another word <b>homogeneous</b> = “same + kind” = consisting of one substance
<b>hyper-</b>	above or over	<b>hypersensitive</b> , <b>hyperactive</b> <b>hyperbole</b> = “above + throw” = exaggeration

<b>hypo-</b>	below or under	<b>hypoallergenic</b> <b>hypothesis</b> = “under” + thesis = tentative assumption to explore <b>hypodermic</b> = “under + skin” = injected beneath the skin
<b>in-</b> <b>im-</b>	in or into or on	<b>inspect, import, inject</b> <b>incisive</b> = “into + cut” = cutting to the heart of a matter, direct <b>induct</b> = “in + lead” = admit as a member
<b>in-</b> <b>im-</b>	not	<b>incredible, impossible, impenetrable, inevitable</b>
<b>infra-</b>	below	<b>infrared, infrastructure</b>
<b>inter-</b> <b>intro-</b>	between	<b>international, intervene, interject</b> <b>interpolate</b> = “inside + polish” = fill in missing pieces, words, or data <b>introspect, introvert, introduce</b>
<b>intra-</b> <b>intr-</b>	within or into	<b>intramuscular, intramural</b> <b>intrinsic</b> = “inside + follow” = internal to something's nature
<b>magn-</b>	big or great	<b>magnificent</b> <b>magnanimity</b> = “great + spirit” = nobility of spirit
<b>mal-</b> <b>male-</b>	bad	<b>maladjusted</b> <b>malevolent</b> = “bad + will” = wishing harm, ready to do evil <b>maleficent</b> = “bad + do” = doing harm