



● Sentence Completion 16 *(low-advanced SAT level)*

Directions: Choose the best word(s) to complete each sentence.

1. After the curtain was removed, the so-called wizard no longer appeared to be _____ and all-knowing; rather, he appeared to be _____.
A. oblivious ... an imposter
B. omniscient ... a charlatan
C. pedestrian ... a sham
D. obnoxious ... a fraud
E. astute ... an officiant
2. After Belle kissed the Beast and removed the curse, the change in his appearance was _____, but the more important change in his personality was a far slower transition; it took months to turn him from a _____ to a magnanimous and loving individual.
A. sluggish ... cynic
B. immediate ... benefactor
C. delusional ... buffoon
D. instantaneous ... misanthrope
E. lugubrious ... malcontent
3. Far more than being merely _____, the business school lecturer tended to border on _____.
A. abstemious ... fruition
B. jaunty ... wanderlust
C. verbose ... prolixity
D. pervasive ... scarcity
E. terse ... poignancy
4. The building was so badly damaged that the fire inspector decided it was best to simply _____ it and start anew, as the building was completely irreparable.
A. raze
B. fashion
C. salvage
D. stymie
E. recuperate
5. Before the revolution, France was among the most _____ nations in the history of the world; the small, elite ruling class owned as much wealth as the vast majority of the peasant class combined.
A. unified
B. dignified
C. stratified
D. sanctified
E. ossified
6. The original film version of Graham Greene's novel _____ its anti-American message, undermining Greene's political sentiment altogether.
A. verifies
B. foreshadows
C. concurs
D. accedes
E. subverts

Answers and Explanations

1) B

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. Here, the key words are found in the phrase “all-knowing,” a phrase that, like the missing word, describes what the wizard appeared to be. Thus, the first missing word must be one that means something akin to all knowing. The second missing word appears in a clause that begins with “rather,” which means that the second missing word must imply what the “so-called wizard” actually was. There will be a slight opposite relationship between the first and second words. Therefore, choice **(B)** is correct, as *omniscient* means all knowing and a *charlatan* is a liar or a deceiver. If someone pretends to be an all-knowing wizard but he or she is not, then that person is a deceiver.

(A) is incorrect because *oblivious* means completely unaware, though the wizard was considered “all-knowing” before the curtain was removed. The wizard was *an imposter* (a deceitful pretender), but this answer choice is still incorrect because the first word in the answer choice does not fit the question.

(C) is incorrect because *pedestrian* means commonplace or ordinary, though the wizard appeared “all knowing” before the curtain was removed, implying that he appeared to be far from ordinary. The wizard’s powers were *a sham* (a deluding trick), but this answer choice is still incorrect because the first word in the answer choice does not fit the question.

(D) is incorrect because *obnoxious* means offensive or annoying. Nothing in the prompt implies that the wizard was ever offensive, so this answer is completely off topic. The wizard was *a fraud* (a false misrepresentation), but this answer choice is still incorrect because the first word in the answer choice does not fit the question.

(E) is incorrect because *astute* means clever or observant, though nothing in the prompt implies that the wizard was clever or observant. We know he was not actually “all-knowing” as he appeared to be, but that does not necessarily mean he was not clever or observant. Furthermore, the wizard was not *an officiant* (someone who presides over a religious ritual). Wizards preside over magical rituals and spells, but the question strongly implies that this man was no wizard at all.

2) D

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. Here, each missing word has its own key words. The first missing word’s key words are the phrase “a far slower transition,” as the first word refers to how quickly the “change in [the Beast’s] appearance” was. As the first missing word hinges on the coordinating conjunction “but,” the missing word

must be the opposite meaning of the key word, as “but” implies contradiction between clauses. Therefore, the first missing word must be one that means fast or not slow. The second missing word’s key words are “magnanimous” and “loving,” two words that describe what the Beast ultimately became. The missing word is a noun describing what he was before undergoing the transition, so the second missing word must be one that means un-loving. Choice **(D)** is the best choice, as *instantaneous* means done in a single moment, while a *misanthrope* is one who hates people.

(A) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. A *cynic* is one who does not trust human motives and could describe one who was the opposite of one who loved people, but *sluggish* means slow. The prompt juxtaposes the speed of the Beast’s changes in physical appearance with the “far slower transition” of his personality. One would not juxtapose two slow transitions.

(B) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Immediate* means done in a single instant and, as such, would work in context for the first missing word, but a *benefactor* is one who donates money to a charity or individual. Such a person would be described as “magnanimous” and “loving,” so it would not make sense for one to transition from a benefactor to someone who is loving.

(C) is incorrect because neither word works in context. *Delusional* means not grounded in reality, and a *buffoon* is an oaf. Neither word has anything to do with the speed the Beast’s changes in appearance or personality.

(E) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. A *malcontent* is someone who dislikes the way things currently are and, as such, could describe one who was the opposite of one who loved people. However, *lugubrious* means very sad, so this word has nothing to do with the speed of the Beast’s transition.

3) C

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using key words from the prompt. Here, the only key words are ones that affect the construction of the prompt, not the content of it. The phrases “far more than being merely” and “tended to border on” imply that the two words are synonymous with each other, with the second word being a more extreme version of the first word. The correct answer is the one that provides two words that have such a relationship. Therefore, choice **(C)** is the correct answer, as *verbose* means wordy and *prolixity* means tedious or extreme wordiness.

(A) is incorrect because the words have no clear relationship. *Abstemious* means temperate, while *fruition* means realization or fulfillment.

(B) is incorrect because the words have no clear relationship. *Jaunty* means lighthearted, while *wanderlust* means the desire to travel.

(D) is incorrect because the words are opposites, not synonyms. *Pervasive* means present in all places, while *scarcity* refers to a limited quantity of something, implying that something is not present everywhere.

(E) is incorrect because the words have no clear relationship. *Terse* means short in speech, while *poignancy* means being deeply moving emotionally.

4) **A**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. Here, the key word is “irreparable,” and the prompt hinges on a cause-and-effect relationship. The missing word is the effect of the fact that the building was irreparable and that the fire inspector thought it best to “start anew.” Of the answer choices, only choice (A) provides a word that could possibly be the effect of the building’s irreparableness, as *raze* means destroy completely, implying the fire inspector wanted to finish destroying the building to start anew.

(B) is incorrect because *fashion* means construct. The prompt implies that the fire inspector decided to “start anew,” but the missing word is about what should happen to the badly damaged building, not the efforts to construct or fashion a new one.

(C) is incorrect because *salvage* means rescue from loss. The prompt actually implies the opposite, that the fire inspector believes the building to be impossible to rescue from loss at all and should instead be destroyed.

(D) is incorrect because *stymie* means present an obstacle. The fire that destroyed the building was enough of an obstacle that it seems unlikely the fire inspector would suggest placing another one before the building.

(E) is incorrect because *recuperate* means recover, something that the building is unable to do, as it is “irreparable.”

5) **C**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. Here, the key words for the missing word are found in the prompt’s long second clause “the small, elite ruling class owned as much wealth as the vast majority of the peasant class combined.” This clause is used to elaborate upon the information presented in the first clause, as the use of the conjunction “as” makes clear. Thus, the missing word must be one that suggests a great difference between social classes. Choice (C) provides such a word: *stratified* means divided into social classes.

(A) is incorrect because *unified* means joined as one and has, as such, the opposite meaning of the missing word.

(B) is incorrect because *dignified* means stately and is, as such, a word that could only describe one of the prompt's social classes and not the situation in the country as a whole.

(D) is incorrect because *sanctified* means made holy. Nothing in the prompt discusses whether or not any aspect of pre-revolution France was holy.

(E) is incorrect because *ossified* means hardened. Nothing in the prompt discusses whether or not any aspect of pre-revolution France was hardened or turned into law.

6) **E**

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using key words from the prompt. The key word in this sentence is "undermining," a word that, like the missing word, describes what the film version of the novel does. The transition between clauses in the prompt is a comma only, meaning that the two clauses describe each other. Thus, the missing word must also mean undermines. Choice **(E)** is, therefore, correct, as *subverts* means undermines or corrupts.

(A) is incorrect because *verifies* means proves or confirms. It is, thus, the opposite of a correct answer, as the correct answer is a word that lines up with "undermining."

(B) is incorrect because *foreshadows* means portends or hints at something later to come. As the novel and film version of Greene's books are, apparently, quite different, it would not make sense for one to foreshadow the other.

(C) is incorrect because *concur*s means agrees with. It is, thus, the opposite of a correct answer, as the correct answer is a word that lines up with "undermining."

(E) is incorrect because *accedes* means agrees. It is, thus, the opposite of a correct answer, as the correct answer is a word that lines up with "undermining."