



SENTENCE COMPLETION

Strategies for Solving Sentence Completion Questions:

1. Read the sentence.

Read carefully for sentence clues. Words and sentence structure make questions tough. If you can't analyse a sentence to find the best fit, you CANNOT answer the question even if you know the words. We must dissect sentences and expand our vocabulary.

2. Tips

The hints show what should go in the blanks. Change the clue, and the blank choice MUST change. Put the clue word or phrase in the blank.

3. Possibilities

Once you uncover word hints, mark them with a + (positive meaning) or – (negative meaning). These symbols signify synonyms and antonyms.

4. Grammar

But, rather, although, nonetheless, and, while, but, therefore

They show sentence structure and hint-blank relationships. They tell you which words affect the sentence's cognitive process.

5. Visualize

Before looking at the alternatives, brainstorm fill-ins. It prevents mistakes. Eliminating words is easy if you know their KIND. A general notion is fine as a visual word.

Directions: Complete the sentence using the word or set of words for each blank that best fits the meaning of the sentence as a whole.

1. Most people felt the punishment was far too ___ for the crime: what the culprit did was so despicable, even _____, as to warrant a far more severe reprimand.
 - A. permissive ... dormant
 - B. regal ... august
 - C. tolerant ... pompous
 - D. draconian ... nefarious

E. lenient ... heinous

2. All of the features added to the new model of the automobile seemed totally ___ and did not add anything of import or practicality to the car.

- A. obnoxious
- B. superfluous
- C. pretentious
- D. mundane
- E. prescient

3. Though the play was only two hours long, it was so ___ that it seemed to last eons.

- A. erroneous
- B. tedious
- C. enthralling
- D. enigmatic
- E. tantalizing

4. One of the lessons of *The Great Gatsby* is not to give in to ____: if Gatsby had not sentimentalized the past, he would never have tried to repeat it.

- A. nostalgia
- B. irony
- C. nirvana
- D. mawkishness
- E. pretext

5. It became abundantly clear that there was nothing more that could be done to save the business, as years of irreversible and poor decisions had been contributing to its slow decay.

- A. myopic
- B. monumental
- C. mutable
- D. moribund
- E. motley

6. Everything about Clyde Frazier both on and off the basketball court was _: a flashy dresser, he always stood out wherever he went.

- A. egregious
- B. conspicuous
- C. covert
- D. embryonic
- E. clandestine

Answers and Explanations

1) E

To figure out what the missing words are, try to predict their definitions by using keywords from the prompt. Here, each missing word has its own keywords. The first missing word's keywords are found in the final clause of the sentence: "as to warrant a far more severe reprimand." The construction of the prompt implies that the first missing word describes the original punishment, one that was not as severe as most thought it should be. The second word's keyword is "despicable," and the inclusion of the modifier "even" before the missing word implies that the missing word must mean extremely despicable. Because *lenient* means mild or permissive, and *heinous* means atrocious or hatefully bad, choice (E) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Permissive* means characteristically tolerant and would, therefore, work for the first missing word. However, *dormant* means sleeping or lethargic and, therefore, has nothing to do with "despicable."

(B) is incorrect because neither word works in context. *Regal* means royal, while *august* means majestic. Neither word refers to either the punishment in question or the "despicable" act.

(C) is incorrect because only the first word works in context. *Tolerant* means permissive or not punishing and would, therefore, work for the first missing word. However, *pompous* means arrogant and, therefore, has nothing to do with "despicable."

(D) is incorrect because only the second word works in context. *Draconian* means extremely severe. This is the opposite of the missing word, which must mean not severe enough. However, *nefarious* means very wicked and would work in context for the second word.

2) B

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using keywords from the prompt. The keywords here are "did not add anything of import or practicality," and the missing word must have a similar meaning, as the conjunction "and" suggests that both are descriptive of the car's new features. Thus, the missing word must mean unnecessary. Since *superfluous* means unnecessary, choice (B) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because *obnoxious* means extremely unpleasant, though nothing in the prompt implies either that the automobile's new features are unpleasant.

(C) is incorrect because *pretentious* means pompous or assuming import. The prompt states only that the new features of the car don't add anything to it, not that they assume importance.

(D) is incorrect because *mundane* means commonplace, though nothing in the prompt implies either that the automobile's new features are typical or atypical. Rather, the prompt only states that they "did not add anything of import" to the car.

(E) is incorrect because *prescient* means having knowledge of things before they occur. The prompt states only that the new features of the car don't add anything to it, not that they are glimpses of the future.

3) B

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using keywords from the

prompt. Here, the keywords are “it seemed to last eons.” The prompt is constructed in such a way that the second clause contradicts the first one (because of the keyword “though”), and the missing word is the reason for the contradiction. The sentence states that the play was relatively short but seemed to last a very long amount of time. Therefore, the missing word must mean something akin to dull, as a dull play would seem to be longer than it actually is. Therefore, choice **(B)** is correct, as *tedious* means boring.

(A) is incorrect because *erroneous* means mistaken. This is not a word that would explain why the play seemed to last longer than it actually did.

(C) is incorrect because *enthralling* means capturing or exciting. Therefore, this word would imply that the play was not boring at all and, as such, would not seem to last a long time.

(D) is incorrect because *enigmatic* means mysterious. This is not a word that would explain why the play seemed to last longer than it actually did.

(E) is incorrect because *tantalizing* means exhibiting something that provokes interest or expectation. It is not a word that would explain why the play seemed to last longer than it actually did.

4) A

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using keywords from the prompt. Here, the keywords are “sentimentalized the past,” and the prompt indicates that this is what Gatsby did, though the lesson of the book is not to do so. Therefore, the missing word must mean sentimentalizing the past. Choice **(A)** is the correct answer, as *nostalgia* is a longing for an idealized past.

(B) is incorrect because *irony* is hidden sarcasm or an unexpected result. The prompt indicates only that Gatsby “sentimentalized the past,” not that he was sarcastic or that he behaved unexpectedly.

(C) is incorrect because *nirvana* is the Buddhist teaching of the ideal state of enlightenment. Gatsby was not a Buddhist, and the fact that he “sentimentalized the past” does not imply that he found enlightenment.

(D) is incorrect because *mawkishness* is extreme sentimentality. This word is close in meaning to the missing word, as the missing word does have to do with sentimentality, but avoiding mawkishness alone cannot be the lesson of the book, as the lesson has to hinge on Gatsby’s relationship to the past and attempts to “repeat it.”

(E) is incorrect because *pretext* is an excuse. Nothing in the prompt indicates that Gatsby attempted to make excuses about his past, as all that is indicated is that he “sentimentalized” it.

5) D

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using keywords from the prompt. Here, the keywords are found in the noun clause “slow decay.” The prompt hinges on a cause-and-effect relationship with the first clause, including the missing word, being the effect of the “irreversible and poor decisions” of the second clause. Thus, the missing word must relate to the effect of a “slow decay.” A slow decay would lead to death, so the missing word must mean dying or near death. Because *moribund* means dying, choice (D) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because *myopic* means near-sighted. Though the decisions the company made might have been near-sighted, the prompt makes it clear that the business itself is suffering the consequences of these decisions. The missing word must be the effect of the decisions and not a description of the decisions themselves.

(B) is incorrect because *monumental* means massive. Nothing in the prompt indicates the size of the business, so this word does not work in context.

(C) is incorrect because *mutable* means adaptable or changeable. Nothing in the prompt indicates that the business is now or ever has been adaptable, so this word does not work in context.

(E) is incorrect because *motley* means mixed. Nothing in the prompt indicates that the business was made up of diverse parts, so this word does not work in context.

6) B

To figure out what the missing word is, try to predict its definition by using keywords from the prompt. The keywords here come in the final clause of the sentence: “he always stood out wherever he went.” This phrase comes after a colon, and colons are used to separate explanatory information from the rest of a sentence. Therefore, everything that comes after the colon here describes or defines the missing word, so the missing word must mean impossible not to notice. Because *conspicuous* means easily seen, choice (B) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because *egregious* means notorious or noticeably bad. Thus, it is close in meaning to the proper missing word, as the prompt states that Frazier “always stood out wherever he went.” However, egregious has a negative connotation. Nothing in the prompt indicates that Frazier did anything bad in his life.

(C) is incorrect because *covert* means hidden or secretive. It is the exact opposite of a word that would be used to describe someone who “always stood out wherever he went.”

(D) is incorrect because *embryonic* means undeveloped or rudimentary. Nothing in the prompt indicates that Frazier was not fully developed, so this answer is completely unsupported.

(E) is incorrect because *clandestine* means hidden or secretive. As such, it has the exact opposite meaning of a word that would be used to describe someone who “always stood out wherever he went.”