

Sentence Completion Techniques

- ❖ Remember that sentence completion is about finding a word that best fits the context of your sentence, i.e. a word that best suits the mood and tone of the sentence and retains the meaning of the sentence.
- ❖ The correct answer should retain the syntax (language rules and sentence structure) of, and be compatible with, the grammatical cues of the sentence.
- ❖ After reading a sentence and before looking at the answer choices, think of a word(s) you would insert or of a word(s) that “fits” the sentence.
- ❖ *Example 1:*
 - *Although it was not apparent at the time, in _____ we can see how Miles Davis' performances in the 1970s were _____ by what was happening then in popular music.*
 - a) Retrospect... influenced
 - b) Effect... modified
 - c) Fact... unchanged
 - d) Foresight... endangered
 - e) Time... engendered
- ❖ **Be alert to transitional words (words that tell you what is coming up-contrast or support indicators)**
- ❖ **Contrast indicators:** Look for signal words connecting contrasting ideas. Your answer choices should thus reflect a word directly opposite to the signal word; if there are two blanks then try to zero in on that choice that carries one positive and another negative word. Some signal words are: *however, although, on the other hand, but, instead, despite, regardless, rather than, nevertheless, in contrast, whereas* and *except*.
- ❖ *Example 2:*
 - *Can public opinion be influenced so that it _____ rather than encourages the proliferation of the sale of firearms?*
 - a) Redoubles
 - b) Advances
 - c) Inverts
 - d) Impedes
 - e) Amplifies
- ❖ **Support indicators:** Notice signal words connecting similar ideas. Other signal words such as *in other words, besides, and, in addition to, also, therefore, furthermore, likewise, for, indeed, similarly, truly* and *as*, often connect similar ideas.



❖ *Example 3:*

- This treatise is *concerned only* with the process *unique* to the period in question; *therefore*, no attempt has been made to _____ phenomena _____ to that era.
 - a) Include... unrelated
 - b) Omit... irrelevant
 - c) Re-create... germane
 - d) Discuss... essential
 - e) Evaluate... pertinent

❖ **Cause and effect indicators:** these words indicate that one thing causes another to occur. Some common indicators are, *because; thus; therefore; for; hence, if __, then __; accordingly; consequently; and due to.*

❖ *Example 4:*

- *Because* the Senate has the votes to override a presidential veto, the President has *no choice but* to _____.
 - a) Object
 - b) Abdicate
 - c) Abstain
 - d) Capitulate
 - e) Compromise

❖ Focus on signal words that help define words. Still other signal words will give you a definition or point you to the definition of the word needed.

❖ *Example 5:*

- Editorial cartoonists *cannot be successful unless* they can _____ the consciences of their audience and *stir up* controversy.
 - a) Assuage
 - b) Tweak
 - c) Dwarf
 - d) Amuse
 - e) Shield

❖ Watch for contrast between positive and negative words. Look for words like *not, cannot, never, and no*. The right answer will be the word opposite to the signal word emphasizing the contrast.

❖ *Example 6:*

- The chairperson was noted for *not being obstinate; on the contrary*, the members praised her _____.
 - a) Resistance
 - b) Experience
 - c) Coherence
 - d) Verbosity
 - e) Flexibility

- ❖ Negative words can change the direction of the sentence. Be alert to such cues and follow the direction the sentence is going in. The syntax is very important in such sentences and can aid in proper selection.
- ❖ *Example 7:*
 - The room was in an *advanced state of disrepair*; *not only* were the velvet draperies _____, but they were *also molted and* _____.
 - a) Bright... torn
 - b) Old... clean
 - c) Faded... frayed
 - d) New... mangled
 - e) Tattered... original
- ❖ Questions with two words missing should be attempted one word at a time. But remember that both words must fit. However, sometimes, it is more efficient to work from the second blank first; this is because it is easier to fill in.
- ❖ *Example 8:*
 - The _____ *predictions of greatly decreased revenues* next year have *frightened* lawmakers into _____ budget reductions.
 - a) Encouraging... sizable
 - b) Convincing... minute
 - c) Alarming... negligible
 - d) Optimistic... huge
 - e) Dire... drastic
- ❖ If you don't spot any signal words or you don't know the meaning of some of the choices (or if you're just stumped) quickly read each answer choice in and see which sounds best. Sometimes this last method will help you at least eliminate some of the choices so that you can take an educated guess.
- ❖ *Example 9:*
 - Many lawyers now believe that the _____ of the tobacco industry is so widely _____ by the public that juries will finally be willing to convict the corporations when the cases go to jail.
 - a) Advertising... disseminated
 - b) Propaganda... credited
 - c) Repute... supported
 - d) Mendacity... queried
 - e) Guilt... acknowledged

Answers to Example Questions:

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