

• Sentence Completion 1 Level 8

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. Ludwig van Beethoven was a musical _____, playing his first professional concert at only seven years old.
A. hack
B. phenomenon
C. spectacle
D. fluke
E. prodigy
2. Stephen's parents encourage him to pursue a _____ career in medicine or law; they want to see him become rich and successful.
A. stressful
B. worthwhile
C. rewarding
D. lucrative
E. prestigious
3. Although Dina is _____ about the governor's reelection campaign, Carla regards it with _____.
A. passionate ... indifference
B. reckless ... callousness
C. upset ... carelessness
D. exuberant ... enthusiasm
E. exceptional ... zeal
4. Students who are interested in foreign languages are encouraged to _____ their studies by adding courses in linguistics to their schedules.
A. accelerate
B. condense
C. supplement
D. prolong
E. duplicate
5. The novelist had _____ manner that could irk anyone; after all, no one likes _____.
A. a meek ... a genius
B. a pompous ... an egotist
C. a standoffish ... a bore
D. an arrogant ... an optimist
E. an assertive ... a braggart
6. Known for her patience and kindness, Nurse Steele is one of the most _____ employees in the entire hospital.
A. boorish
B. benign
C. genial
D. irritable
E. contrary
7. Many Horatio Alger stories feature _____ young man who is able to achieve the American Dream because of his own hard work and merit.
A. a fortunate
B. an insolent
C. a ruthless
D. a diligent
E. a negligent
8. Six months of chemotherapy and radiation have left my cancer-stricken aunt looking unhealthy and _____.
A. gaunt
B. brawny
C. vigorous
D. svelte
E. trim

Answers and Explanations

1) E

The main clue in this question is the phrase “playing his first professional concert at only seven years old.” This describes Beethoven’s musical skills and implies that he had great talent at a young age. The missing word describes what Beethoven was. A *prodigy* is someone who has great talent or ability at a very young age, so choice (E) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because a *hack* is a person who works solely for money. Nothing in the prompt implies that Beethoven played music only for money.

(B) is incorrect because a *phenomenon* is a rare or significant occurrence or event. Although it is not common to see child musicians as highly skilled as Beethoven was, this is too general in meaning to work in context. A phenomenon can be something besides a talented child.

(C) is incorrect because a *spectacle* is a notable or entertaining public display. Although it is not common to see child musicians as highly skilled as Beethoven was, this is too general in meaning to work in context. A spectacle can be something besides a talented child.

(D) is incorrect because a *fluke* is a mistake or stroke of luck. Nothing in the prompt implies that Beethoven’s skill was the result of a mistake.

2) D

The main clue in this sentence is the semicolon, which is used to link independent clauses that state similar information. This means that what Stephen’s parents “encourage him to pursue” is related to the fact that “they want to see him become rich and successful.” The missing word must therefore mean rich and successful. Since *lucrative* means producing a great deal of profit, choice (D) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because *stressful* means causing mental or emotional anguish. There is no logical relationship between having a career that is stressful and becoming “rich and successful.” Many stressful jobs do not lead to high earnings or wealth.

(B) is incorrect because *worthwhile* means important or worth the time and effort spent. There is no logical relationship between having a career that is worthwhile and becoming “rich and successful.” Many worthwhile and important careers do not result in high earnings or wealth.

(C) is incorrect because *rewarding* means providing satisfaction. There is no logical relationship between having a career that is rewarding and becoming “rich and successful,” since rewarding is not synonymous with making money.

(E) is incorrect because *prestigious* means inspiring respect and admiration. There is no logical relationship between a career that is prestigious and becoming “rich and successful.” Not all prestigious or high-status careers necessarily result in high earnings or wealth.

3) A

The main clue in this question is the word “although,” which means that two things are related in a negative or opposite way. The correct choice will set up an opposite relationship between how Dina feels “about the governor’s reelection campaign” and how Carla regards it. *Passionate* means showing strong feelings, while *indifference* is a lack of interest or concern. These are opposites, so choice (A) is correct.

(B) is incorrect because it does not provide a pair of opposites. *Reckless* means careless, while *callousness* is hard-heartedness or showing no sympathy. These words have no clear relationship.

(C) is incorrect because it does not provide a pair of opposites. *Upset* means unhappy or worried, while *carelessness* is negligence or a lack of care. These words have no clear relationship.

(D) is incorrect because it does not provide a pair of opposites. *Exuberant* means filled with lively energy and excitement, while *enthusiasm* is eagerness and enjoyment. These words are almost synonyms, not opposites of each other.

(E) is incorrect because it does not provide a pair of opposites. *Exceptional* means outstanding or very good, while *zeal* is great energy or enthusiasm. These words have no clear relationship.

4) C

The main clue in this question is the phrase “adding courses in linguistics.” This phrase explains how students can do what the missing word describes. By adding courses, one would be adding to “their studies,” so the missing word must mean add. Because *supplement* means to make something more complete by adding to it, choice (C) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because *accelerate* means to speed up. Nothing in the prompt implies that linguistics courses can make a student’s education go by faster.

(B) is incorrect because *condense* means to concentrate or shorten. Nothing in the prompt implies that linguistics courses can make a student’s education become shorter.

(D) is incorrect because *prolong* means to make longer. Nothing in the prompt implies that linguistics courses can make a student's education grow longer.

(E) is incorrect because *duplicate* means to make a second copy. Nothing in the prompt implies that linguistics courses can make a student's education double or be copied.

5) B

The main clue in this question is the phrase "after all," which links together clauses that state similar information. Here, the part of the sentence that contains "after all" is used to explain why the novelist's tone "could irk anyone." This means that the author's "manner" must relate to what "no one likes." *Pompous* means arrogant or affectedly self-important, while *an egotist* is someone who is self-conceited or arrogant. These words have similar meanings, so choice (B) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because it does not set up a logical relationship. *Meek* means submissive, while *a genius* is someone who is very smart. These words have no clear relationship.

(C) is incorrect because it does not set up a logical relationship. *Standoffish* means unfriendly, while *a bore* is someone who is dull and uninteresting. These words have no clear relationship.

(D) is incorrect because it does not set up a logical relationship. *Arrogant* means having an inflated or exaggerated view of oneself, while *an optimist* is someone who is hopeful and confident about the future. These words have no clear relationship.

(E) is incorrect because it does not set up a logical relationship. *Assertive* means having a confident and forceful personality, while *a braggart* is someone who brags or boasts about himself or herself. These words have no clear relationship, since an assertive person might not be a braggart.

6) C

The main clue in this question is the phrase "known for her patience and kindness." This phrase, like the missing word, describes Nurse Steele, so the missing word must likewise mean patient or kind. Because *genial* means friendly and cheerful, choice (C) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because *boorish* means insensitive or crude. This does not set up a logical relationship with the fact that Nurse Steele is "known for her patience and kindness."

(B) is incorrect because *benign* means harmless. Although this may describe Nurse Steele, nothing in the prompt implies that she is either harmful or harmless.

(D) is incorrect because *irritable* means easily angered. This does not set up a logical relationship with the fact that Nurse Steele is "known for her patience and kindness."

(E) is incorrect because *contrary* means oppositional or unfavorable. This does not set up a logical relationship with the fact that Nurse Steele is "known for her patience and kindness."

7) D

The main clue in this question is the phrase "hard work," which describes the "young man" in the stories. The missing word likewise describes the young man, so it must also mean hardworking. Because *diligent* means hardworking, choice (D) is correct.

(A) is incorrect because *fortunate* means lucky. This does not work because being lucky is not related to being hardworking.

(B) is incorrect because *insolent* means rude and arrogant. Nothing in the prompt implies that the "young man" in the stories is either rude or arrogant, since the prompt only implies that he is hardworking.

(C) is incorrect because *ruthless* means having no pity or compassion for others. Nothing in the prompt implies that the "young man" in the stories lacks compassion for others, since the prompt only implies that he is hardworking.

(E) is incorrect because *negligent* means careless. Nothing in the prompt implies that the "young man" in the stories is careless, since the prompt only implies that he is hardworking.

8) A

The main clues in this question are "cancer-stricken" and "unhealthy." The correct choice must describe the narrator's aunt's appearance as it relates to these two qualities. Both of these are characteristics describing someone who is ill. *Gaunt* means unhealthily or excessively thin, and it would describe someone who is sick, so choice (A) is correct.

(B) is incorrect because *brawny* means muscular or powerful. This word does not set up a logical relationship with "cancer-stricken" and "unhealthy."

(C) is incorrect because *vigorous* means strong or powerful. This word does not set up a logical relationship with "cancer-stricken" and "unhealthy."

(D) is incorrect because *svelte* means healthily trim or thin. This word does not set up a logical relationship with “cancer-stricken” and “unhealthy.”

(E) is incorrect because *trim* means thin or fit. This word not set up a logical relationship with “cancer-stricken” and “unhealthy.”