



PSAT

PSAT-Reading
Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test - Reading

Questions & Answers PDF

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Question: 1

In general, new breakthroughs in scientific and biological research allow us to identify origins of many viruses of formerly _____ origins.

- A. escapable
- B. mysterious
- C. abstract
- D. useful
- E. memorable

Answer: B

Explanation:

Choice B, "mysterious," indicates that the origin of many viruses are discovered now only through new research methods.

Question: 2

Hitherto impossible research has been made _____ by the new technology recently engineered by her company with greatly enhanced scope and depth of mapping the core of the earth.

- A. commonplace
- B. controversial
- C. problematic
- D. feasible
- E. resolute

Answer: D

Explanation:

Given that the technology is new, it would hardly be Choice A, "commonplace," and since we're looking for a positive word--remembering that important tool of monitoring the tone of the sentence--Choice D, "feasible," is the best choice.

Question: 3

The dissimilarities are absolutely striking; even though she is _____, she has few friends, and even though she is a _____ stylist, few customers ask for her when booking.

- A. cute. . .fair
- B. amiable. . .consummate

- C. professional. . .haphazard
- D. nice. . .radical
- E. magnificent. . .futuristic

Answer: B

Explanation:

We're clearly looking for two qualifiers here: one regarding her ability to make friends as an offset to having few of them; two regarding her profession as a stylist and an offset to her having few requesting customers. Remembering the clue phrase "even though" is telling us that the word we're looking for is again, an offset to the conditions that follow that phrase. In the first blank, all choices are possible, although Choice B, "amiable," means easy to get along with, a really good match to the friendship issue. The second blank is the easier to eliminate bad choices and since "consummate" means complete or perfect, it is a good fit to her professional qualifications notwithstanding her lack of requesting customers.

Question: 4

Sales literature that provide excessively complex and irrelevant numbers tend to _____ the real facts and generate sales by causing buyers to accept _____ data in lieu of the real and truthful information so hidden.

- A. obscure. . .spurious
- B. hide. . .rational
- C. confuse. . .representational
- D. elucidate. . .faulty
- E. define. . .questionable

Answer: A

Explanation:

Since the conditions set are "excessively complex and irrelevant," we are going to looking for two negatives. Looking at the first blank, only Choices A, B, and C are negative. Looking for a negative in the second blank, only "spurious" in that group of three qualify, making Choice A, "obscure," which means dim, hazy, or vague and "spurious," which means not genuine the best choice.

Question: 5

Only his truest and most _____ fans remained faithful followers following the news of his steroid use.

- A. reticent
- B. vocal
- C. demonstrative
- D. boisterous

E. ardent

Answer: E

Explanation:

Only Choice E represents something other than volume or noise. "Ardent," or characterized by warmth of feeling is the stand-alone qualifier.

Question: 6

It was her need to _____ that caused her to become an _____; the belief that the government was corrupt and the constant censorship being the two principal causes for move.

- A. express. . .outcast
- B. release. . .icon
- C. expose. . .outsider
- D. expatiate. . .expatriate
- E. control. . .anarchist

Answer: D

Explanation:

We're looking for a cause-and-effect relationship here, and that relationship has to do with the beliefs about the corrupt government and the fact that she is constantly censored. Someone who is censored has a need to present, and toward that end, Choices A, B, C, and D all qualify. Since we also know that her action involved moving, we can reduce the choices based on the second blank to Choices C and D.

Further looking at the result of her actions and the subtleties of the sentence, we find that the censorship is recurring. So, in fine-tuning the first blank, we look for the word that best indicates a repetitive action.

That choice is D, "expatiate," which means to speak or write at length indicating often, making Choice D the best selection.

Question: 7

Not desirous of meeting his Maker in the middle of a poker game, Doc Holiday _____ placed an ace inside his vest as Bat Masterson shuffled the remaining cards.

- A. suspiciously
- B. coyly
- C. overtly
- D. furtively
- E. brazenly

Answer: D

Explanation:

Clearly, we're looking for a word that suggests not drawing attention to oneself or causing a distraction away from the shuffling. Choice B, "coyly," might look like a possibility, but there is nothing shy or pretending shyness about hiding an ace in your vest opposite Bat Masterson. Choice D, "furtively," which means slyly or secretly done is the best choice.

Question: 8

Given _____ politicians can generally raise campaign financing easier than challengers, Lt. Governor James should have the advantage.

- A. honest
- B. incumbent
- C. entrepreneurial
- D. opulent
- E. gregarious

Answer: B

Explanation: Choice E, "gregarious," is an excellent distractor as it means social or companionable; a good trait for a politician to be sure, especially if he is raising money. But the gist of the sentence is not about qualifying a politician except in light of him or her being in office as opposed to a challenger. Choice B, "incumbent," best qualifies for this distinction.

Question: 9

Following the completion of an unusually arduous day at the office, Sue happily enjoyed the _____ experience of relaxing in the hot tub while watching television learning that she just won the state lottery.

- A. erratic
- B. superfluous
- C. halcyon
- D. untoward
- E. geriatric

Answer: C

Explanation:

We're looking for a word that describes a most pleasant experience that causes much joy and is an offset to a difficult day. Choice C, "halcyon," meaning prosperous or most pleasant certainly fits the bill on both counts--pleasant hot tub and prosperous winning of the lottery.

Question: 10

I trust a proposal for matrimony would seem more _____ were it written in the sky, or written on a scoreboard, or written in a test question for the SAT prep; which is what I am formally doing now in asking Teresa for her hand in marriage.

- A. aggrandized
- B. sincere
- C. appreciated
- D. honorable
- E. cherished

Answer: A

Explanation:

While all of the choices should apply, the best selection for the test question is Choice A, "aggrandized," which means to make great or greater, which is certainly my greatest hope.

Question: 11

Friends of the theater have long decried the ___ of the New York drama critics, whose reviews can determine the fate of a play in a single night.

- A. insensitivity
- B. provinciality
- C. intelligence
- D. power
- E. inaccuracy

Answer: D

Explanation:

The missing word must fit the description of the critics given in the second half of the sentence. If they "can determine the fate of a play in a single night," then clearly they have a lot of "power."

Question: 12

The ___ manner in which the teacher candidate addressed the school board was a key factor in his

rejection; the school board members agreed that enthusiasm is an essential quality in a teacher.

- A. pretentious
- B. solicitous
- C. superficial
- D. perfunctory
- E. combative

Answer: D

Explanation:

Remember that a semicolon (;) often indicates that the two halves of the sentence restate or paraphrase the same idea. The second half of this sentence tells us that the members of the school board wanted

"enthusiasm" in a teacher candidate. Therefore, the word that describes the candidate they rejected should mean the opposite of "enthusiastic." "Perfunctory" fits the bill.

Question: 13

Her ___ writing style made it difficult to follow her thought processes--no surprise to her colleagues, who were familiar with her ___ manner of speech.

- A. precise . . arcane
- B. laborious . . tedious
- C. trite . . flippant
- D. convoluted . . circumlocutory
- E. ambiguous . . affected

Answer: D

Explanation:

Since both blanks here describe something similar--the way this unnamed person communicates--the two words should be near-synonyms. And the words "difficult to follow her thought processes" make it clear that both missing words should mean "hard to understand, unnecessarily complicated"

Question: 14

The giant squid is still ___ marine biologists, as it has never been seen alive, making it impossible to study in its natural habitat.

- A. fascinating to
- B. enigmatic to
- C. dangerous to
- D. exploited by

E. famous among

Answer: B

Explanation:

This sentence has a cause-and-effect relationship, as indicated by the word "as." If the squid "has never been seen alive," one could logically conclude that it would be "enigmatic"

Question: 15

Advertising can increase sales of a ___ product, but it cannot create demand for a bad one; consumers may buy a ___ item because of advertising--but only once.

- A. good..new
- B. reliable . . costly
- C. useful . . valuable
- D. needless . . single
- E. well-made . . badly made

Answer: E

Explanation:

Both halves of the sentence make much the same point--that people will buy good products but not bad ones. Only the words in choice E. fit this idea.



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