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# 2

## ENGLISH USAGE

### Fill – In – The – Blanks (Sentence Completion)



#### Caution

#### How NOT to solve a sentence completion?

1. Read the sentence
2. Try out the options one by one
3. Eliminate some options and then try again to fit in the remaining ones till one choice is left

This of course should be the natural approach for solving any such question. But actually it is a very time consuming method and the choices are such that many students tend to be confused while using this option and might not always get the correct answer.

#### Remember



Sentence Completion questions do not test your vocabulary knowledge only. These questions test your reasoning abilities as well. In fact some questions can be solved with reasoning abilities only, even if you have no idea about the meanings of some of the words. (Who said you can get these correct without any knowledge of words?)

### What is The Strategy?



#### Toolkit

#### Look for Structural Keywords

As stressed earlier, a sentence completion question will focus more on reasoning abilities of the student than on vocabulary knowledge. The sentences have keywords whose significance, if known to the student, can help him in finding the answer instantly ( and of course correctly! )



Despite the supposedly primitive lifestyle, Australian aborigines developed the boomerang, a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ hunting tool that maximizes gain with minimum effort.

- (1) ponderous...expensive                      (2) clean....dynamic  
(3) dangerous....formidable                  (4) sophisticated....efficient  
(5) useful....attractive

**Structural Keyword** here is: "Despite"

**Significance:** Even if the lifestyle is primitive, aborigines have developed a tool which shows characteristics dissimilar to tools of such a primitive era or similar to tools of modern era. So the tool must be having a positive connotation; in other words both the blanks should be highlighting the **positive aspects of the tool**.

**Steps:**

1. Eliminate any choice with negative words: (1) and (3) are eliminated.
2. Possible answers (2), (4), (5)  
Is/are there any other important word/words worthy of your consideration

**Other Keywords:** "maximizes gain with minimum effort"

**Significance:** The blank/blanks should capture this idea of maximizes gain with positive effort.

**Steps:**

1. Out of the remaining choices, only choice (4) has a word (efficient) which captures this idea.
2. Hence, correct answer is Choice (4).

**Summarizing:**

1. Find the structural keyword and try to find the significance of it. Significance is nothing but analyzing what could come in the blank / blanks before looking at the answer choices.
2. Find choices which are closer to the significance that you have drawn from the keyword.
3. If the answer choice has not been found then look for other important words in the sentence and analyze their significance as in step 1.
4. Now you will be able to select the answer out of the choices at step 2 by finding a word that best captures the significance in step 3.

## Remember



This method has been explained in detail. Therefore it might seem time consuming. But with practice through this highly structured approach you should be able to combine Step 1 and 3 and straightaway find the answer from the combined significance of keywords and other important words will give you.

## Common Connecting Patterns



Following connecting patterns will help you in offering a compendious analysis of sentence completion questions.

**Contrast:** Quite often, one part of the sentence contains an idea that is in contrast to, opposed to, or different from an idea in another part of the sentence.

## Example



Unlike Shakespeare, who wrote his best novels during \_\_\_\_\_, Bacon wrote some of his finest novels when he was over seventy years old.

- (1) illness                      (2) war                      (3) youth  
(4) marriage                      (5) convalescence



## Toolkit

**Structural Key word:** Unlike

**Other Important words:** seventy years old

**Significance:** The blank should be opposite of seventy years or old age

**Answer: (3)**

Similar words signaling Contrast are  
although    by contrast    despite    however    nevertheless  
nonetheless    on the other    hand    whereas    yet    but

## Similarity



In this kind of sentence, one part of the sentence describes something that is similar to something described in another part of the sentence.

## Example



**Here's an example:**

Just as musicians in the 1970s were amazed by the powers of the electronic synthesizer, so musicians in the time of Bach \_\_\_\_\_ the organ, the technical wonder of its day.

- (1) railed against                      (2) marveled at                      (3) were troubled by  
(4) strove to master                      (5) practiced on



## Toolkit

**Structural Key words:** Just as, so

**Other Important words:** amazed, technical wonders

**Significance:** Just as the musicians of 1970s were amazed, so the musicians in the time of Bach must have been amazed as well. So the blank must be a synonym of amazed. Also the instrument was a technical wonder of the day, hence the blank must have a positive word. **Answer: (2)**

Keywords highlighting similarity are:

as ... as	in the same way	like	likewise
resembles	same	similarly	also
further	more in addition	as well as	moreover
at the same time			

Example 

In a sentence with this kind of organization, one part of the sentence states an idea, and another part gives an example of that idea.

Look at this sentence.

Biologists have often gained special insights by examining the life forms that develop in \_\_\_\_\_ regions, as illustrated by Darwin's studies of evolution among the finches on certain \_\_\_\_\_ Pacific islands.

- (1) arid ... lush                      (2) harsh ... tropical                      (3) typical ... unusual  
(4) crowded ... deserted                      (5) isolated ... remote



### Toolkit

**Structural Key word:** As illustrated

**Other Important words:** No such words

**Significance:** Both the blanks should be synonyms or conveying the same idea.

**Answer: (5)**

Keywords highlighting example are:

as in the case of ... for example for instance specifically such as

Restatement 

In this kind of sentence, one part of the sentence restates or repeats (in different words) what is said in another part of the sentence. (Sometimes writers will do this to make a new or complicated idea a little clearer.) These are also called conclusion signposts .

Example 

**Here's an example:**

Public attitudes toward business \_\_\_\_\_ are deeply \_\_\_\_\_; most people resent intrusive government rules, yet they expect government to prevent businesses from defrauding, endangering, or exploiting the public.

- (1) ethics ... cynical                      (2) investment ... divided  
(3) practices ... emotional                      (4) regulation ... ambiguous  
(5) leaders ... hostile



## Toolkit

**Structural Key word:**

**Other Important words:** resent intrusive rules, yet

**Significance:**

The presence of a semi colon (;) means that the part of the sentence after that restates the idea given in the part before it. Hence the first blank should be related to rules. Regulation in Choice (4) is the best match. Answer: (4)

Keywords highlighting restatement are:

in fact      in other words      in short      namely      so to speak  
that is      are therefore thus      consequently      hence so      to conclude

## Cause and Effect



In this kind of sentence, one part describes something that causes, produces, or influences what's described in another part.

**Here's an example:**

Because of the power and recognition that go with public office, incumbent politicians have enormous \_\_\_\_\_ when waging election campaigns against outside challengers.

- (1) difficulties      (2) expenses      (3) advantages
- (4) budgets      (5) concerns

Example



## Toolkit

**Structural Key word:** Because

**Other Important words:** power and recognition

**Significance:** Power and recognition will lead to a positive outcome for an incumbent politician. Answer: (3)

Keywords highlighting cause and effect are:

as a result      causes      consequently      due to  
leads to      produces results in      therefore thus