

Chapter 8 Practice Exercises

Fill in the Blank

Choose the word that best completes the meaning of the sentence.

1. Jarel was as clever as he was autocratic, and he knew what he could not obtain by legitimate means he could always obtain through _____.
A) bossiness
B) contretemps
C) autonomy
D) regeneration
2. The visiting professor was so prominent in his _____ that many of our faculty members became nervous in his presence.
A) antithesis
B) contraband
C) vocation
D) rehabilitation
3. The orator _____ a bizarre economic program whose central tenet was the abolition of all forms of money.
A) depleted
B) advocated
C) apprehended
D) anthologized
4. Using the word “sciences” for the word “sinuses” is an example of a _____.
A) dictum
B) malapropism
C) malignancy
D) vocation

5. The actor, pretending to be inebriated, made a _____ attempt to open his umbrella in a telephone booth.
- A) peripatetic
 - B) posthumous
 - C) silly
 - D) disparate

Synonyms

Match each word on the left with the word most similar in meaning on the right.

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. opaque | a. obscure |
| 2. posterity | b. guilty |
| 3. malcontent | c. exemption |
| 4. debase | d. prudent |
| 5. wise | e. degrade |
| 6. enamored | f. descendants |
| 7. impugn | g. captivated |
| 8. impunity | h. accuse |
| 9. culpable | i. restless |
| 10. out-of-place | j. anachronistic |

SAT Quick Quiz

Read each passage and answer the questions that follow.

The following passage comes from a book of literary criticism by John Gardner.

The language of art critics, and of artists of the kind who pay attention to critics, has become exceedingly odd: not talk about feelings or intellectual affirmations—not talk about moving and surprising twists of plot or wonderful characters and ideas—
Line 5 but sentences full of large words like hermeneutic, heuristic, structuralism, formalism, or opaque language, and full of fine distinctions—for instance those between modernist and post-modernist—that would make even an intelligent cow suspicious. Though more difficult than ever before to read, criticism has
10 become inconsequential.

The trivial has its place, its entertainment value. I can think of no good reason that some people should not specialize in the behavior of the left-side hairs of an elephant's trunk. Even at its best, its most deadly serious, criticism, like art, is partly a
15 game, as all good critics know. My objection is not to the game but to the fact that contemporary critics have for the most part lost track of the point of their game, just as artists, by and large, have lost track of the point of theirs. Fiddling with the hairs on an elephant's nose is indecent when the elephant happens to be
20 standing on the baby.

At least in America, art is not thought capable, these days, of tromping on babies. Yet it does so all the time, and what is worse, it does so with a bland smile. I've watched writers, composers, and painters knocking off their "works" with their
25 left hands. Nice people, most of them. Artists are generally pleasant people, childlike both in love and hate, intending no harm when they turn out bad paintings, compositions or books. Indeed, their ambition guarantees that they will do the best they know how to or think they ought to do. The error is less in their
30 objects than in their objectives. "Art is play, or partly play," they'll tell you with an engaging smile, serving up their non-nutritious

fare with the murderous indifference of a fat cook serving up hamburgers. What they say is true enough, as far as it goes, and nothing is more tiresome than the man who keeps hollering,
35 “Hey, let’s be serious!” but that is what we must holler.

In a world where nearly everything that passes for art is tinny and commercial and often, in addition, hollow and academic, I argue—by reason and by banging on the table—for an old-fashioned view of what art is and does and what the
40 fundamental business of critics therefore ought to be. Not that I want joy taken out of the arts; but even frothy entertainment is not harmed by a touch of moral responsibility, at least an evasion of too fashionable simplifications. My basic message is as old as the hills, drawn from Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Dante,
45 and the rest, and standard in Western civilization down through the eighteenth century: one would think all critics and artists should be thoroughly familiar with it, and perhaps many are. But my experience is that in university lecture halls, or in kitchens at midnight, after parties, the traditional view of art strikes most
50 people as strange news.

The traditional view is that true art is moral: it seeks to improve life, not debase it. It seeks to hold off, at least for a while, the twilight of the gods and us. I do not deny that art, like criticism, may legitimately celebrate the trifling. It may joke, or
55 mock, or while away the time. But trivial art has no meaning or value except in the shadows of more serious art, the kind of art that, if you will, makes the world safe for triviality. The art which tends toward destruction, the art of cynics and nihilists, is not properly art at all. Art is essentially serious and beneficial—a
60 game played against chaos and death, against entropy. It is a tragic game, for those who have the wit to take it seriously, because our side must lose: a comic game because only a clown with sawdust brains would take our side and eagerly join in.

Like legitimate art, legitimate criticism is a tragicomic
65 holding action against entropy. Art builds temporary walls against life’s leveling force, against the ruin of what is splendidly unnatural in us: consciousness. Art rediscovers, generation by generation, what is necessary to humanness. Criticism restates and clarifies, reinforces the wall.

1

As used in line 6, “opaque” most nearly means

- A) dark.
- B) obvious.
- C) solemn.
- D) inscrutable.

2

As used in line 10, “inconsequential” most nearly means

- A) irrelevant.
- B) vital.
- C) careless.
- D) suspicious.

3

The author most likely views the “works” of artists (line 24) with

- A) magnanimity.
- B) apathy.
- C) antipathy.
- D) indifference.

4

As used in line 30, “objectives” most nearly means

- A) artworks.
- B) destructions.
- C) goals.
- D) children.

5

As used in line 32, “indifference” most nearly means

- A) lack of care.
- B) concern.
- C) hatred.
- D) conformity.

6

As used in line 41, “frothy” most nearly means

- A) superficial.
- B) foamy.
- C) luminous.
- D) amorphous.

7

As used in line 52, “debase” most nearly means

- A) degrade.
- B) glorify.
- C) moralize.
- D) deny.

8

As used in context, “trifling” (line 54) and “trivial” (line 55) most nearly mean

- A) magnanimous.
- B) exalted.
- C) shadowy.
- D) unimportant.

9

As used in line 58, “nihilists” are most likely people who

- A) idealize art.
- B) seek to destroy the world.
- C) seek to undermine traditional modes of artistic expression.
- D) are not serious.

10

As used in line 60, “entropy” most nearly means

- A) restoration.
- B) disorder.
- C) tragedy.
- D) frivolity.

11

As used in line 64, “tragicomic” most nearly means

- A) hopeless, and taken up by fools.
- B) successful, yet taken up by clowns.
- C) serious, yet beneficial.
- D) temporary, yet satisfying.

Questions 12–20. The following series of short passages are similar to those that might appear in a longer SAT Reading passage. Read each one closely and answer the questions that follow.

But not if she continued to lead such a reckless life. It was becoming her habit to daily court potential disaster by barely sleeping or eating. She had long ago started ignoring the
Line warnings of her family and friends. Her doctor too suggested
5 that the greatest risk to her health at that point was not her diagnosed disease, but the careless lifestyle.

12

As used in line 2, “court” most nearly means

- A) legislate.
- B) sue.
- C) provoke.
- D) judge.

If there is one imaginative work of the Romantic era that scientists should pay attention to, it is Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. Shelley was familiar with some of the most
Line exciting scientific developments of her day, especially Galvani’s
5 experiments with electricity as a life-force. Very much rooted in the science of its day, *Frankenstein* embodies a profound awareness of the larger human context of scientific endeavor.

13

The author’s attitude toward Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* is best described as one of

- A) curiosity.
- B) indignation.
- C) nostalgia.
- D) admiration.

Economist Benjamin Grant believes differently. His group, Citizens Against Debt, works to educate people regarding the danger of easy access to loans. As he recently pointed out,
Line “Credit cards have become the new life preserver. How will I pay
5 for that new massage chair? A credit card. How will I pay off my credit card? Another credit card. How will I pay the fine to get released from debtor’s prison? Does the court take credit cards?”

14

The tone of Benjamin Grant’s comment is best described as

- A) laudatory.
- B) derisive.
- C) dubious.
- D) despondent.

Archibald Suttle, quivering, set his teacup on the table and stood up, so he could have free reign to make his next point.

“Well then, there must be thoughts of propriety. Propriety,
Line madam! A woman in this day and age cannot just marry the
5 first stagecoach driver that comes along. A marriage requires, like all things, a firm footing. Not to say love should not enter into the thing, far from it. I am quite fond of my Mrs. Suttle. It was, however, a fondness born of our compatibility in financial matters: we both came from the same place, as it were. Horse
10 before the cart, Elizabeth, not the other way around!”

15

As used in line 3, “propriety” most nearly means

- A) appropriateness.
- B) self-consciousness.
- C) recklessness.
- D) fondness.

When director John Guillermin remade *King Kong* in 1976, he and producer Dino De Laurentis went to great lengths to convince moviegoers that they were seeing an actual giant ape on the screen in front of them. With a film like 1999's *The Matrix*, however, co-directors Andy and Larry Wachowski used computer generated imagery not intending to produce lifelike results, but to put a highly stylized accent on the visuals. In one now-famous fight scene, the female character Trinity is about to boot a bad guy when she is frozen in mid-air; the camera then sweeps around her, providing a panoramic view of the kick to come. The Wachowski brothers were not trying to convince viewers that a person could suspend herself as Trinity does. Instead, they were trying to come up with a shot that would make jaws drop.

16

The tone of the passage is best characterized as

- A) vexed.
- B) ambivalent.
- C) nihilistic.
- D) laudatory.

The witty and ferocious critic—whose frequently negative reviews give the impression he has a vicious appetite for new literature—destroys this demonic portrait when he appears by
Line appearing before you as a shy and uncomfortable soul. His is of
5 slender limb and deprecating glance. He stammers and makes a painful spectacle of himself when you ask his opinion of the latest best seller or hit play.

17

Which of the following words would most effectively replace “negative” in line 1?

- A) powerful.
- B) evil.
- C) belittling.
- D) painful.

18

As used in line 6, “spectacle” most nearly means

- A) display.
- B) annoyance.
- C) triumph.
- D) achievement.

19

The passage suggests the critic’s reviews are typically

- A) disparaging.
- B) humorous.
- C) diffident.
- D) empathetic.

In 1876, Roberts Brothers launched a line of books they called the “No Name Series.” At the time, Roberts Brothers was a well-known publisher of such literary luminaries as Robert Louis Stevenson, Walt Whitman, and Louisa May Alcott.

20

As used in line 3, “luminaries” most nearly means

- A) tragic heroes.
- B) prominent figures.
- C) prolific writers.
- D) infamous people.