Chapter 8 Practice Exercises

Fill in the Blank

Choose the word that best completes the meaning of the sentence. Answers can be found on page 235.

1. Jarel was as clever as he was autocratic, and he knew that what he could not obtain by legitimate means, he could always obtain through _____.
   A) bossiness
   B) anticipation
   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) consensus
   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. Something that is within your very nature is _____ to you.
   A) dictated
   B) intrinsic
   C) malignant
   D) vocational

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

Synonyms

Match each word on the left with the word most similar in meaning on the right. Answers can be found on page 236.

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 question that follows. Answers can be found on page 236.

The following excerpts for questions 1–9 come from a book of literary criticism by John Gardner.

1 Mark for Review

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—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 postmodernist—that would make even an intelligent cow suspicious. Though more difficult than ever before to read, criticism has become inconsequential.

As used in the text, what does the word "opaque" most nearly mean?

(A) Dark

(B) Obvious

(C) Solemn

(D) Inscrutable

2 Mark for Review

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 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 standing on the baby.

As used in the text, what does the word "trivial" most nearly mean?

(A) Suspicious

(B) Irrelevant

(C) Vital

(D) Careless

3 Mark for Review

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 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 author most likely views the works of the "artists" described in the text with

(A) magnanimity.

(B) apathy.

(C) antipathy.

(D) indifference.

4 Mark for Review

The error is less in their 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, “Hey, let’s be serious!” but that is what we must holler.

As used in the text, what does the word “indifference” most nearly mean?

(A) Lack of care

(B) Concern

(C) Hatred

(D) Conformity

5 Mark for Review

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 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.

As used in the text, what does the word "frothy" most nearly mean?

(A) Superficial

(B) Foamy

(C) Luminous

(D) Amorphous

6 Mark for Review

My basic message is as old as the hills, drawn from Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Dante, 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 people as strange news.

According to the author, most people would respond to the traditional view of art with

(A) ambivalence.

(B) degradation.

(C) bewilderment.

(D) resignation.

7 Mark for Review

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 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.

As used in the text, what does the word "debase" most nearly mean?

(A) Degrade

(B) Glorify

(C) Moralize

(D) Deny

8 Mark for Review

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 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.

As used in the text, what does the word "entropy" most nearly mean?

(A) Restoration

(B) Disorder

(C) Travesty

(D) Frivolity

9 Mark for Review

Like legitimate art, legitimate criticism is a tragicomic 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.

As used in the text, what does the word "splendidly" most nearly mean?

(A) Hopelessly

(B) Successfully

(C) Seriously

(D) Remarkably

Questions 10–20. The following series of short texts are similar to those that might appear before each SAT Reading question. Read each one closely and answer the question that follows.

10 Mark for Review

Once considered _____, that wrinkling that occurs on your fingers when you have been in the water for a considerable amount of time may be more significant than you think. Scientists have recently conducted a series of underwater experiments that demonstrated that those with wrinkled fingers and toes had improved grip and balance while manipulating objects and walking underwater than those without wrinkling.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

(A) magnanimous

(B) exalted

(C) shadowy

(D) unimportant

11 Mark for Review

"Did you think we wanted this?" spat Jason angrily as he stared at the copy of the test that Oliver had stolen. "If Ms. Bartels knows we have this, we're all going to fail tomorrow's exam! She won't believe the rest of us haven't seen it—she knows that we all hang out! Are you trying to _____ all of the hard work we put into passing on our own?"

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

(A) idealize

(B) seek out

(C) undermine

(D) lighten

12 Mark for Review

Jaffe's book emphasizes that even successful, high-profile, and seemingly generous companies _____ their workers. While amenities such as free meals, on-site gyms, arcades, and napping pods may appear to be benevolent perks to attract and reward talented employees, the companies that offer these benefits are actually doing so in order to get as much as they can out of their workers. If employees never have to leave the office to eat, exercise, or socialize, they'll be more dedicated to their work and produce more for the extremely wealthy company leaders.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

(A) temper

(B) compensate

(C) exploit

(D) circumvent

13 Mark for Review

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 exciting scientific developments of her day, especially Galvani's 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.

The author most likely views *Frankenstein* with

(A) curiosity.

(B) indignation.

(C) nostalgia.

(D) admiration.

14 Mark for Review

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, "Credit cards have become the new life preserver. How will I pay 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?"

Which of the following best describes the tone of Benjamin Grant's comment?

(A) Laudatory

(B) Derisive

(C) Dubious

(D) Despondent

15 Mark for Review

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 _____. A woman in this day and age cannot just marry the 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 Ms. Suttle. It was, however, a fondness born of our compatibility in financial matters: we both came from the same place, as it were. Horse before the cart, Elizabeth, not the other way around!"

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

(A) propriety

(B) self-consciousness

(C) recklessness

(D) fondness

16 Mark for Review

When director John Guillermin remade *King Kong* in 1976, he and producer Dino De Laurentiis 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 Lana and Lilly 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 Wachowskis 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.

Which of the following best describes the tone of the text?

(A) Vexed

(B) Ambivalent

(C) Nihilistic

(D) Laudatory

17 Mark for Review

Long considered one of America's most alarming neighborhoods, the Tenderloin District in San Francisco, California, has one of the highest rates of homelessness in the country. At least one activist group has called for a name change to start improving the district's poor reputation, but this suggestion has been criticized as _____; critics argue that much more substantial and aggressive reforms are needed to truly change the perception of the area.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

(A) powerful

(B) evil

(C) trivial

(D) painful

18 Mark for Review

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

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

(A) spectacle

(B) annoyance

(C) triumph

(D) achievement

19 Mark for Review

Edgar Allan Poe is best known today as author of the horrific and poet of the macabre, but during his lifetime, he was better known as critic rather than writer. A favorite target of his was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, whom Poe often accused of copying tonal notes and plagiarizing thematic concepts from other poems.

The text suggests that Poe's critiques of Longfellow's poems were often

(A) disparaging.

(B) humorous.

(C) diffident.

(D) empathetic.

20 Mark for Review

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 _____ as Robert Louis Stevenson, Walt Whitman, and Louisa May Alcott.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

(A) luminaries

(B) artists

(C) skeptics

(D) protagonists