

# CUET 2026 English May 29 Shift 2

## Question Paper (Memory-Based) with Solutions

Conducted by National Testing Agency (NTA)



### General Instructions

- (i) The examination will be conducted in Computer-Based Test (CBT) mode.
- (ii) Each question carries +5 marks for correct answer and -1 mark for wrong answer.
- (iii) The total number of questions are 50.
- (iv) Duration of the exam is 1 hour (60 minutes).

1. Identify the figure of speech used in the phrase: 'The multi-millionaire investigator lived in a modest, tiny apartment.'

- (A) Oxymoron
- (B) Irony
- (C) Metaphor
- (D) Hyperbole

**Correct Answer:** (B) Irony

#### Solution:

##### Step 1: Understanding the Question:

The objective of this question is to identify the correct figure of speech used in the provided sentence.

Figures of speech are essential literary devices used to convey meaning beyond the literal definition of the words.

##### Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

To determine the correct literary device, we must analyze the key components of the sentence

and the definitions of the options provided:

- **Irony:** Irony is a literary device or situation where there is a contrast between expectation and reality.

In the given sentence, a "**multi-millionaire**" is a person of immense wealth, who would naturally be expected to live in a grand, luxurious mansion.

However, the investigator lives in a "**modest, tiny apartment.**"

This clear contrast between expected wealthy living standards and the actual humble choice of residence is a classic example of situational irony.

- **Oxymoron:** An oxymoron involves two contradictory terms placed side-by-side to create a compact, rhetorical effect.

Examples include "deafening silence" or "seriously funny."

In this sentence, the contrasting ideas are not adjacent words modifying the same noun, so this option is incorrect.

- **Metaphor:** A metaphor is a direct comparison between two unrelated things without using comparison words such as "like" or "as."

Since no direct comparison is made between the investigator and another entity, this option does not apply.

- **Hyperbole:** Hyperbole is an extreme exaggeration used to emphasize a point or create a dramatic effect.

The description of the apartment as "modest" and "tiny" is a realistic description of the setting and does not constitute an exaggeration.

### Step 3: Final Answer:

Therefore, based on the clear contrast between expectation and reality, the correct option is (B).

**Quick Tip:** To identify situational irony in exams, look for elements that contrast sharply with normal logic or societal expectations.

If a highly wealthy character lives in extreme modesty, it is a reliable indicator of irony.

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**2. Rearrange the given phrases to form a meaningful sentence:**

**P: in the market | Q: global oil prices | R: a sharp decline | S: caused panic**

- (A) QPSR
- (B) RQSP
- (C) RQPS
- (D) SPQR

**Correct Answer:** (B) RQSP

**Solution:**

**Step 1: Understanding the Question:**

The objective of this sentence rearrangement task is to organize four distinct phrases into a grammatically correct and coherent sentence.

Analyzing the syntactic roles of each phrase helps determine their proper chronological order.

**Step 2: Detailed Explanation:**

To rearrange the phrases logically, let us evaluate the grammatical function of each segment:

- **Identifying the Subject:** The noun phrase "**a sharp decline**" (R) acts as the grammatical subject of the sentence.
- **Connecting with Preposition:** The noun "decline" naturally connects with the noun phrase "**global oil prices**" (Q) via an implied preposition "in" to specify what has decreased.

This forms the complete subject clause: "A sharp decline in global oil prices."

- **Finding the Verb Phrase:** The action verb phrase "**caused panic**" (S) acts as the predicate of the sentence.  
It explains the immediate effect or impact of the subject.
- **Locating the Adverbial Modifier:** The prepositional phrase "**in the market**" (P) serves as an adverbial phrase of place.  
It indicates where the panic occurred.
- **Reconstructing the Sentence:** Combining these elements logically gives: "A sharp decline (R) in global oil prices (Q) caused panic (S) in the market (P)."  
This sequence of phrases corresponds to  $R \rightarrow Q \rightarrow S \rightarrow P$ , which is represented by RQSP.
- **Analyzing Incorrect Options:** Options like QPSR, RQPS, and SPQR either break basic subject-verb agreement rules, leave actions without subjects, or create incoherent structures.

**Step 3: Final Answer:**

Therefore, the correct arrangement that forms a meaningful and grammatically cohesive sentence is RQSP, which corresponds to option (B).

**Quick Tip:** In sentence reordering, always identify the main subject first, followed by its primary action verb.

This establishes the core structure (Subject + Verb + Object) before adding modifiers or adverbial phrases.

**3. Substitute the phrase with a single word: 'A person who looks at the brighter side of things'**

- (A) Pessimist
- (B) Optimist
- (C) Misanthrope

(D) Altruist

**Correct Answer:** (B) Optimist

**Solution:**

**Step 1: Understanding the Question:**

This question requires finding a single-word equivalent for the descriptive phrase "A person who looks at the brighter side of things."

One-word substitution tests a candidate's depth of vocabulary and comprehension of specific English nouns.

**Step 2: Detailed Explanation:**

Let us systematically examine the definition of each option to determine the most accurate word:

- **Optimist:** An optimist is defined as a person who tends to be hopeful, confident, and positive about the future or the success of something.  
They naturally look at the brighter side of life and focus on positive outcomes.  
This directly matches the description provided in the question.
- **Pessimist:** A pessimist is the exact antonym of an optimist.  
This refers to a person who habitually anticipates the worst possible outcome or focuses entirely on the negative aspects of situations.
- **Misanthrope:** A misanthrope is a person who holds a general dislike, distrust, or hatred towards human nature, human behavior, or society as a whole.  
This is unrelated to focusing on positive or negative events.
- **Altruist:** An altruist is an unselfish person who is deeply concerned with and actively works for the welfare and happiness of others.  
While a positive trait, it refers to selfless actions rather than a hopeful outlook on life.

**Step 3: Final Answer:**

Thus, the correct one-word substitute for a person who looks at the brighter side of things is "Optimist," matching option (B).

**Quick Tip:** Remembering root words can help solve one-word substitution questions.

The prefix "optim-" comes from the Latin word meaning "best," whereas "pessim-" comes from the Latin word meaning "worst."

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4. Fill in the blank with the correct preposition: 'The administrator was preoccupied \_\_\_\_\_ preparations for the annual audit.'

- (A) with
- (B) at
- (C) in
- (D) for

**Correct Answer:** (A) with

**Solution:**

**Step 1: Understanding the Question:**

The objective of this question is to fill in the blank with the correct preposition to complete the sentence grammatically.

This question focuses on adjective-preposition collocations, commonly known as fixed prepositions in English grammar.

**Step 2: Detailed Explanation:**

To identify the correct preposition, let us analyze the adjective used in the sentence and its standard usage:

- **Understanding the Adjective:** The adjective in the sentence is "preoccupied."  
"Preoccupied" means completely engrossed in, distracted by, or thinking deeply about

something to the exclusion of other thoughts.

- **Analyzing the Collocation:** In standard English grammar, the adjective "preoccupied" is fixedly followed by the preposition "**with**".

Therefore, the phrase "preoccupied with something" is the grammatically correct collocation.

Example: "She was too preoccupied with her exams to go out."

- **Evaluating the Given Sentence:** Applying this rule to the sentence, we get: "The administrator was preoccupied with preparations for the annual audit."

This is grammatically sound and conveys the intended meaning of focus.

- **Evaluating Other Options:** Prepositions such as "at," "in," and "for" do not collocate with "preoccupied" to indicate the subject of focus.

Using "preoccupied at," "preoccupied in," or "preoccupied for" violates standard idiomatic English rules.

### Step 3: Final Answer:

Hence, the correct preposition to fill the blank is "with," which corresponds to option (A).

**Quick Tip:** Adjectives expressing mental absorption (e.g., preoccupied, obsessed, busy, content) are frequently paired with the preposition "with."

Memorizing common collocations is highly effective for prepositions in exams.

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5. Identify the type of clause underlined in the sentence: 'The student who won the scholarship will study at Oxford.'

(A) Noun Clause

(B) Adverb Clause

(C) Adjective (Relative) Clause

(D) Coordinating Clause

**Correct Answer:** (C) Adjective (Relative) Clause

**Solution:**

**Step 1: Understanding the Question:**

The question asks us to identify the specific type of dependent clause underlined in the sentence: "The student who won the scholarship will study at Oxford."

Understanding clause types requires analyzing the grammatical role the clause plays within the main sentence.

**Step 2: Detailed Explanation:**

Let us break down the components of the sentence and analyze the underlined clause:

- **Analyzing the Underlined Clause:** The underlined clause is "**who won the scholarship.**" It begins with the relative pronoun "who" and contains the verb "won."
- **Identifying the Grammatical Function:** This clause directly refers to and modifies the noun "**student,**" which is the subject of the main clause. Since it modifies a noun, it performs the exact function of an adjective. Therefore, it is classified as an **Adjective (Relative) Clause.**
- **Noun Clause:** A noun clause functions as a noun (e.g., subject or object of a verb) within a sentence. Example: "What the student won was amazing." Here, "who won the scholarship" does not act as a noun.
- **Adverb Clause:** An adverb clause modifies a verb, adjective, or adverb, indicating time, place, condition, or cause. Example: "The student will study when the scholarship is awarded." The underlined clause does not perform this function.

- **Coordinating Clause:** A coordinating clause is an independent clause connected by a coordinating conjunction (such as "and", "but", "or").

The underlined clause is dependent and relative, not coordinating.

**Step 3: Final Answer:**

Thus, the underlined clause is an Adjective (Relative) Clause, making option (C) the correct choice.

**Quick Tip:** An adjective clause almost always starts with a relative pronoun (who, whom, whose, which, that) and comes immediately after the noun it describes.

Locating this noun-modifier pattern makes identifying relative clauses straightforward.

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6. Complete the sentence with the most appropriate word: 'The continuous noise from the construction site served to \_\_\_\_\_ his growing headache.'

- (A) alleviate
- (B) aggravate
- (C) mollify
- (D) pacify

**Correct Answer:** (B) aggravate

**Solution:**

**Step 1: Understanding the Question:**

The objective of this vocabulary-based question is to complete the sentence by choosing the most appropriate word from the options.

The correct word must logically align with the context provided by the surrounding terms in the sentence.

**Step 2: Detailed Explanation:**

Let us perform a thorough contextual and semantic analysis of the sentence:

- **Contextual Analysis:** The sentence describes a negative stimulus: "The continuous noise from the construction site."

This stimulus acts on an existing physical ailment: "his growing headache."

Loud, continuous noise would naturally worsen a headache rather than relieve it.

Therefore, we need a word that means "to make worse," "to exacerbate," or "to increase in severity."

- **Aggravate:** The verb "aggravate" means to make a problem, injury, pain, or offensive situation worse or more serious.

This fits the context, as noise aggravates a headache.

- **Alleviate:** "Alleviate" means to make pain or a problem less severe or more bearable.

This is antonymous to the expected effect of construction noise on a headache.

- **Mollify:** "Mollify" means to appease the anger or anxiety of someone, or to soften.

It is generally used for emotions and people, not physical symptoms like headaches.

- **Pacify:** "Pacify" means to quell anger, agitation, or excitement, or to establish peace.

Similar to mollify, it is contextually incorrect for describing physical pain.

### Step 3: Final Answer:

Consequently, the most appropriate word to complete the sentence is "aggravate," corresponding to option (B).

**Quick Tip:** In sentence completion questions, identify whether the overall context is positive or negative.

Since a headache is worsened by noise, eliminate positive words like "alleviate," "mollify," and "pacify."

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7. Choose the correct indirect form of the following imperative sentence: The general said to the soldiers, 'Form a defensive perimeter immediately.'

- (A) The general requested the soldiers to form a defensive perimeter immediately.
- (B) The general ordered the soldiers to form a defensive perimeter immediately.
- (C) The general said to the soldiers that they should form a defensive perimeter.
- (D) The general advised the soldiers to form a defensive perimeter immediately.

**Correct Answer:** (B) The general ordered the soldiers to form a defensive perimeter immediately.

**Solution:**

**Step 1: Understanding the Question:**

This question requires converting an imperative sentence from direct speech into its correct indirect (reported) speech form.

Converting imperative sentences involves modifying the reporting verb and utilizing an infinitive structure.

**Step 2: Detailed Explanation:**

Let us convert the given sentence step-by-step using standard grammar rules:

- **Analyze the Direct Speech:** The direct sentence is: The general said to the soldiers, "Form a defensive perimeter immediately."
  
- **Determine the Tone and Reporting Verb:** The speaker is a "general" (a high-ranking military authority) and the listeners are "soldiers."  
An instruction given by a military commander to subordinates is an authoritative command or order.  
Therefore, the reporting verb "said to" must be changed to "**ordered**" (or "commanded").
  
- **Convert the Imperative Verb:** In reported speech, the main verb of an imperative sentence ("Form") is converted into its infinitive form: "**to form**".

- **Retain Adverbs and Objects:** The remaining portion of the sentence, "a defensive perimeter immediately," remains unchanged as there are no pronouns or tense shifts required.
- **Construct the Indirect Sentence:** Combining these changes, we get: "The general ordered the soldiers to form a defensive perimeter immediately."
- **Eliminate Incorrect Options:**
  - Option (A) uses "requested," which is inappropriate for military command.
  - Option (C) uses "said to... that they should," which is grammatically incorrect for imperative sentences.
  - Option (D) uses "advised," which is incorrect because it implies a suggestion rather than a strict command.

**Step 3: Final Answer:**

Therefore, the correct indirect form of the sentence is option (B).

**Quick Tip:** For imperative sentences in reported speech, always choose the reporting verb (ordered, requested, advised, warned) that fits the relational dynamic between the speaker and the listener. An authority figure like a general will almost always "order" or "command."

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**8. What is the exact meaning of the idiom: 'To throw down the gauntlet'?**

- (A) To accept defeat gracefully
- (B) To issue a formal challenge
- (C) To offer a compromise
- (D) To abandon a project halfway

**Correct Answer:** (B) To issue a formal challenge

## Solution:

### Step 1: Understanding the Question:

The objective of this question is to identify the precise figurative meaning of the common English idiom "To throw down the gauntlet."

Idiomatic expressions have meanings that cannot be directly inferred from the literal definitions of the individual words.

### Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

To understand the exact meaning, let us look at the historical context and usage of this idiom:

- **Historical Context:** A gauntlet was a heavy, armored glove worn by medieval knights. During the Middle Ages, when a knight wished to challenge another knight to a duel or combat, he would remove his gauntlet and throw it on the ground.
- **The Symbolic Act:** Throwing the glove was a public declaration of a challenge. If the opponent picked it up (known as "taking up the gauntlet"), it signified that the challenge was accepted.
- **Modern Figurative Meaning:** In contemporary English, the phrase "to throw down the gauntlet" is used to describe the act of issuing a formal challenge, declaration of war, or severe competition.
- **Analyzing the Options:**
  - Option (A) "To accept defeat gracefully" is incorrect; this is closer to "throwing in the towel."
  - Option (C) "To offer a compromise" is incorrect as the idiom indicates confrontation, not resolution.
  - Option (D) "To abandon a project halfway" is unrelated to the concept of challenging.

### Step 3: Final Answer:

Thus, the exact meaning of the idiom "To throw down the gauntlet" is to issue a formal

challenge, which aligns with option (B).

**Quick Tip:** Learning the historical or cultural origins of idioms is a highly effective way to retain their meanings.

Recognizing "gauntlet" as a knight's glove helps associate the term with dueling and challenging.

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**9. Choose the synonym for the word: EPHEMERAL**

- (A) Eternal
- (B) Transient
- (C) Permanent
- (D) Monolithic

**Correct Answer:** (B) Transient

**Solution:**

**Step 1: Understanding the Question:**

The question asks us to identify the correct synonym for the vocabulary word "EPHEMERAL" from the given options.

Identifying synonyms requires a precise understanding of the target word's denotation and connotations.

**Step 2: Detailed Explanation:**

Let us define and analyze the target word and each of the provided options:

- **EPHEMERAL:** This word is derived from the Greek word "ephēmeros," meaning lasting only for a day.

In modern English, it describes anything that is extremely short-lived, fleeting, or temporary.

Examples include ephemeral flowers, ephemeral moments of joy, or transient weather

patterns.

- **Transient:** This word means lasting for only a short time, impermanent, or passing quickly.  
Since both "ephemeral" and "transient" describe something that does not last long, "transient" is a precise synonym.
- **Eternal:** "Eternal" means lasting or existing forever; without end or beginning.  
This is a direct antonym of ephemeral.
- **Permanent:** "Permanent" means lasting or remaining unchanged indefinitely.  
This is also an antonym of ephemeral.
- **Monolithic:** "Monolithic" describes something massive, solid, uniform, and slow to change (often referring to structures or large organizations).  
It is contextually unrelated to the duration of time.

**Step 3: Final Answer:**

Therefore, the correct synonym for "EPHEMERAL" is "Transient," which is option (B).

**Quick Tip:** Pay attention to antonym pairs in options.

Often, examiners include the antonym of the correct answer (like "eternal" and "permanent" for "ephemeral") to test your precise vocabulary retention.

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**10. Rearrange the given phrases to form a coherent sentence:**

**P:** her assignment ahead of time | **Q:** despite facing several interruptions | **R:** managed to complete | **S:** the diligent student

(A) SRQP

- (B) SRPQ
- (C) QPSR
- (D) PRSQ

**Correct Answer:** (B) SRPQ

**Solution:**

**Step 1: Understanding the Question:**

The objective of this sentence rearrangement question is to arrange the given jumbled phrases (P, Q, R, S) into a coherent, grammatically correct sentence.

Analyzing the sentence structure (Subject-Verb-Object) and syntax rules is key to solving this.

**Step 2: Detailed Explanation:**

Let us evaluate the grammatical role of each segment to construct a logical sentence:

- **Identifying the Subject:** The phrase "**the diligent student**" (S) functions as the noun phrase subject of the sentence.  
It is the entity performing the primary action.
  
- **Identifying the Verb Phrase:** The verb phrase "**managed to complete**" (R) immediately follows the subject to describe the action.  
This gives us "The diligent student managed to complete..."
  
- **Identifying the Object/Complement:** The object of completion is "**her assignment ahead of time**" (P).  
Adding this segment completes the main clause: "The diligent student (S) managed to complete (R) her assignment ahead of time (P)."
  
- **Placing the Contrast Clause:** The phrase "**despite facing several interruptions**" (Q) is a subordinate adverbial clause introduced by the preposition "despite."  
It fits naturally at the end of the sentence to show contrast.  
Placing it here gives: "The diligent student managed to complete her assignment ahead

of time despite facing several interruptions."

This sequence of phrases is represented by  $S \rightarrow R \rightarrow P \rightarrow Q$  (SRPQ).

- **Analyzing Other Options:**

Option (A) SRQP: "The diligent student managed to complete despite facing several interruptions her assignment ahead of time." This is grammatically awkward and disrupts the direct connection between the verb and its object.

Option (C) QPSR and Option (D) PRSQ result in fragmented or nonsensical arrangements.

**Step 3: Final Answer:**

Thus, the correct and coherent arrangement of the phrases is SRPQ, which corresponds to option (B).

**Quick Tip:** Keep the verb "complete" close to its direct object "her assignment" to preserve grammatical logic.

Interrupting transitive verbs from their direct objects often indicates an incorrect options setup.