

CUET 2026 English May 30 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 tone of the author based on the following passage:

'We have built cities of concrete that choke the earth, and we celebrate our progress while the rivers turn black with waste and the forests vanish into memory. This is not advancement; it is a slow, documented suicide.'

- (A) Laudatory and proud
- (B) Objective and detached
- (C) Cynical and condemnatory
- (D) Apathetic and indifferent

Correct Answer: (C) Cynical and condemnatory

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

1. This question requires us to analyze the tone of the author based on a short, intense prose passage criticizing modern human development and its environmental impact.
2. The tone of a passage refers to the author's attitude or emotional state toward the subject matter, which is conveyed through their choice of vocabulary, imagery, and sentence structure.

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

1. Firstly, let us analyze the vocabulary used by the author:

- "concrete that choke the earth" (highly negative, suffocating imagery)
- "rivers turn black with waste" (disgusted, critical observation)
- "forests vanish into memory" (sorrowful, pessimistic outlook)
- "not advancement; it is a slow, documented suicide" (extremely critical, sharp rejection of human claims of progress)

2. Secondly, let us define the terms in Option (C):

- "Cynical" refers to a deeply skeptical attitude towards human motivations, values, or claims of achievement. The author is cynical of human "celebrations of progress", arguing that this progress is a delusion.
- "Condemnatory" means expressing strong disapproval, blame, or censure. The author is strongly condemning modern industrialization and urbanization by calling it a "suicide".

3. Thirdly, let us look at why other options are incorrect:

- Option (A) "Laudatory and proud" means praising and feeling pleased. This is the exact opposite of the passage, as the author rejects any pride in concrete cities.
- Option (B) "Objective and detached" means being neutral, unbiased, and showing no emotion. The strong metaphors like "choke" and "suicide" show that the author is highly emotional and not detached at all.
- Option (D) "Apathetic and indifferent" means not caring or having no interest. The author is very passionate and deeply concerned about the state of the planet, so this option does not apply.

Step 3: Final Answer:

1. The author's tone is highly cynical of human progress and strongly condemnatory of environmental destruction.
2. This matches Option (C).

Quick Tip: 1. Look for extreme words like "choke", "waste", and "suicide". Such loaded terms indicate a passionate, emotional, and highly critical tone (condemnatory) rather than an objective or indifferent one.

2. Eliminate opposite options (like laudatory) immediately to narrow down your choices.

2. Select the correct option to fill in the blank:

'By the time the rescue team arrives next Monday, the stranded climbers _____ on the mountain for a week.'

- (A) will be surviving
- (B) will have survived
- (C) have survived
- (D) would survive

Correct Answer: (B) will have survived

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

1. This is a grammar question focusing on correct tense agreement and usage in complex sentences.
2. We need to identify the correct verb form to fill in the blank, representing an action that will be completed at or before a specified point in the future.

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

1. Firstly, let us analyze the temporal markers present in the sentence:
 - "By the time..." is a prepositional phrase used to denote a deadline or a future target point.
 - "...the rescue team arrives next Monday" establishes that the target point is in the future.
 - "...for a week" represents the duration of the action up to that future target point.
2. Secondly, when we describe an action that will have been completed or will have reached a certain duration *before* or *at* a specific point in the future, we must use the Future Perfect tense.
3. The grammatical structure of the Future Perfect tense is:

Subject + will have + Past Participle (V3)

4. Therefore, the verb "survive" must be written as "will have survived".

5. Thirdly, let us evaluate the incorrect options:

- Option (A) "will be surviving" is in the Future Continuous tense. It would mean they will be actively in the middle of surviving at that moment next Monday, but it fails to convey the completion of the "for a week" duration.
- Option (C) "have survived" is in the Present Perfect tense, which cannot be used to describe an action set in a future timeframe ("next Monday").
- Option (D) "would survive" uses a conditional modal verb, which does not fit the predictive, timeline-based structure of this sentence.

Step 3: Final Answer:

1. The grammatically correct phrase is "will have survived", which completes the Future Perfect construction.
2. This corresponds directly to Option (B).

- Quick Tip:**
1. Whenever a sentence begins with "By the time..." followed by a present tense verb referring to a future event, look for the Future Perfect tense ("will have + V3") in the main clause.
 2. The addition of "for [duration]" (for a week) further reinforces the need for a perfect aspect.

3. Fill in the blank with the appropriate article or select 'No article':

'He is _____ honorable gentleman who always keeps his word.'

- (A) a
- (B) an
- (C) the
- (D) No article

Correct Answer: (B) an

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

1. This grammar question tests the correct application of English articles ("a", "an", "the", or no article) before descriptive noun phrases.
2. The choice between "a" and "an" depends on the phonetic sound of the word immediately following the article, rather than its spelling.

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

1. Firstly, let us identify the word immediately following the blank, which is "honorable".
2. Secondly, we look at the phonetic pronunciation of "honorable".
 - The initial letter 'h' in "honorable" is silent.
 - The word is pronounced as /n.r.bl/, which begins with a vowel sound (the 'o' sound //).
3. Thirdly, let us recall the standard rules for indefinite articles:
 - "A" is used before words that begin with a consonant sound (e.g., "a useful book" where 'u' sounds like /j/).
 - "An" is used before words that begin with a vowel sound (e.g., "an umbrella", "an hour" where 'h' is silent).
4. Since "honorable" begins with a vowel sound, the correct indefinite article is "an".
5. Fourthly, let us check why the definite article "the" or "No article" is not preferred:
 - "The" is used for specific, previously mentioned, or unique entities. While "honorable gentleman" is descriptive, it is introduced here in a general sense to describe his character, which typically warrants the indefinite article "an" unless he is further specified as a unique, singular figure in a known context. Here, "an honorable gentleman" is the natural, idiomatic expression.

Step 3: Final Answer:

1. The correct article to fill in the blank is "an".
2. This matches Option (B).

- Quick Tip:** 1. Never choose "a" or "an" based solely on the spelling of the first letter. Always pronounce the word to check if the first sound is a vowel or consonant.
2. Words like "honorable", "honest", "hour", and "heir" all start with a silent 'h' and require the article "an".

4. Choose the analogy that matches the given pair:

RELIABLE : TRUST

- (A) Deceptive : Misleading
- (B) Formidable : Fear
- (C) Ignorant : Knowledge
- (D) Beautiful : Sight

Correct Answer: (B) Formidable : Fear

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

1. This question tests our ability to identify relationships between pairs of words (analogies) and apply the same relationship to a new set of words.
2. We must analyze the connection between the words "RELIABLE" and "TRUST" and find an option that mirrors this logic.

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

1. Firstly, let us establish the relationship in the original pair: "RELIABLE : TRUST".
 - "Reliable" is an adjective.
 - "Trust" is a noun.
 - The relationship is cause-and-effect or state-and-response: Someone or something that is "reliable" inspires, evokes, or causes "trust" in others.
 - Thus, the bridge sentence is: "Something that is [Adjective] inspires [Noun]."
2. Secondly, let us test each option using this bridge sentence:
 - Option (A): "Deceptive : Misleading". "Deceptive" is an adjective and "misleading" is also an adjective (or participle). They are synonyms. This does not fit our "inspires/evokes" relationship.
 - Option (B): "Formidable : Fear". "Formidable" is an adjective meaning inspiring fear or respect through being impressively large, powerful, or intense. "Fear" is a noun. A "formidable" opponent inspires "fear". This perfectly matches the "inspires/evokes" bridge sentence.
 - Option (C): "Ignorant : Knowledge". "Ignorant" is an adjective describing a lack of "knowledge". This represents an antonymous or privative relationship (lacking something),

not an evocative one.

- Option (D): "Beautiful : Sight". "Beautiful" means pleasing to the senses, especially to the sight. It does not mean "inspires sight" because sight is the medium of perception, not the feeling or reaction evoked.

3. Therefore, Option (B) is the only pair that matches the relationship structure.

Step 3: Final Answer:

1. The analogy that best matches the relationship in "RELIABLE : TRUST" is "Formidable : Fear".

2. This corresponds to Option (B).

Quick Tip: 1. When solving analogies, always write a simple sentence (a bridge sentence) showing the exact relationship between the first and second word.

2. Pay attention to the parts of speech: in the stem, we have [Adjective] : [Noun]. This helps eliminate Option (A) immediately since "misleading" is not a noun.

5. What is the meaning of the idiom: 'To blow hot and cold'?

(A) To suffer from sudden mood swings or temperature changes

(B) To alternate constantly between enthusiasm and indifference

(C) To speak in a very ambiguous or confusing manner

(D) To pick fights without any valid reason

Correct Answer: (B) To alternate constantly between enthusiasm and indifference

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

1. This vocabulary-based question asks for the correct figurative meaning of the common English idiom "To blow hot and cold".

2. Idioms are expressions whose meanings cannot be understood literally from the individual

words themselves; instead, they have established cultural and figurative meanings.

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

1. Firstly, the origin of the idiom "to blow hot and cold" traces back to Aesop's Fable of "The Satyr and the Traveler".

- In the story, a traveler blows on his hands to warm them up (blowing hot) and then blows on his soup to cool it down (blowing cold). The Satyr finds this behavior untrustworthy because the same mouth produces opposite results.

2. Secondly, figuratively, the idiom is used to describe a person who is highly inconsistent and variable in their attitude, opinions, or level of interest towards something.

- "Hot" represents passion, excitement, support, or enthusiasm.

- "Cold" represents lack of interest, neglect, or indifference.

- Therefore, a person who blows hot and cold keeps alternating between being very excited and supportive one minute, and completely uninterested the next.

3. Thirdly, let us examine why other options are incorrect:

- Option (A) is a literal interpretation involving physical temperature or mood swings, which is not the exact figurative definition of this idiom.

- Option (C) refers to being vague or ambiguous, which is represented by idioms like "to beat around the bush".

- Option (D) refers to being argumentative or hostile, which is represented by idioms like "to pick a bone" or "to have a chip on one's shoulder".

Step 3: Final Answer:

1. The correct meaning of the idiom "To blow hot and cold" is to alternate constantly between enthusiasm and indifference.

2. This corresponds directly to Option (B).

Quick Tip: 1. Always avoid literal options (like temperature changes in Option A) when dealing with idioms; idioms are almost always entirely figurative.

2. Think of "hot" as enthusiastic and "cold" as distant/uninterested to easily remember this idiom's meaning.

6. Find the word that is correctly spelled from the choices below:

- (A) Conscientious
- (B) Conscenscious
- (C) Conscientous
- (D) Consientious

Correct Answer: (A) Conscientious

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

1. This is a spelling proficiency question that asks us to identify the correct spelling of an adjective meaning governed by or conforming to one's conscience (wishing to do what is right, thorough, and careful).

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

1. Firstly, let us break down the morphology and syllables of the word:

- The word is "Conscientious".
- It originates from the noun "conscience" (which is spelled c-o-n-s-c-i-e-n-c-e).
- When we add the adjectival suffix "-tious", the spelling evolves to "conscientious".

2. Secondly, let us look at the syllable division of the correct spelling:

- Con- (c-o-n)
- scien- (s-c-i-e-n)
- tious- (t-i-o-u-s)
- Combined: Conscientious.

3. Thirdly, let us evaluate the errors in the incorrect options:

- Option (B) "Conscenscious" is incorrect because it replaces the "t" with an "sc" in the final syllable and alters the middle vowels.
- Option (C) "Conscientous" is incorrect because it misses the letter "i" in the suffix, making it "-tous" instead of the correct "-tious".
- Option (D) "Consientious" is incorrect because it misses the letter "c" in the second syllable, simplifying "sci" to "si".

4. Therefore, Option (A) is the only word with the correct spelling.

Step 3: Final Answer:

1. The correctly spelled word is "Conscientious".
2. This corresponds to Option (A).

Quick Tip: 1. To remember this difficult spelling, relate it to the root word "science" which is found right in the middle: Con-SCIENCE-tious. Since "science" is spelled s-c-i-e-n-c-e, it will help you remember the "sci" part.

2. The suffix is always "-tious" (pronounced "shus"), which contains a "t" and not an "sc".

7. Substitute the phrase with a single word:

'One who completely abstains from alcoholic beverages'

- (A) Atheist
- (B) Teetotaler
- (C) Ascetic
- (D) Somnambulist

Correct Answer: (B) Teetotaler

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

1. This vocabulary question tests our knowledge of "One-word Substitutions."
2. We need to find the specific noun that describes a person who chooses to completely avoid drinking any alcohol.

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

1. Firstly, let us define the correct term, "Teetotaler".
 - A teetotaler is a person who practices total abstinence from all alcoholic drinks.
 - The origin of the word comes from the early 19th-century temperance movement, where

people emphasized the letter "T" in "total abstinence" to mean "T-total" (completely total) abstinence.

2. Secondly, let us define and contrast the other options to understand why they are incorrect:

- Option (A) "Atheist" refers to a person who disbelieves or lacks belief in the existence of a God or any supreme deity. This has nothing to do with dietary choices or alcohol.

- Option (C) "Ascetic" refers to a person who practices severe self-discipline and avoids all forms of physical pleasure and indulgence, often for spiritual or religious reasons. While an ascetic might abstain from alcohol, the term is much broader and refers to an entire lifestyle of self-denial (including food, comfort, and possessions). It is not the specific term for someone who avoids alcohol.

- Option (D) "Somnambulist" is a medical/scientific term for a sleepwalker (someone who walks around while asleep). This is completely unrelated to alcohol.

Step 3: Final Answer:

1. The precise one-word substitute for "One who completely abstains from alcoholic beverages" is "Teetotaler".

2. This matches Option (B).

Quick Tip: 1. Think of the word "tea" in "teetotaler" to remember that this person drinks non-alcoholic beverages like tea instead of alcohol.

2. Always look for the most specific word available; "ascetic" is a good distractor, but "teetotaler" is the exact term dedicated to alcohol abstinence.

8. Choose the correct preposition to complete the idiomatic expression:

'The suspect was absolved _____ all charges by the high court.'

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

Correct Answer: (A) from

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

1. This question tests our knowledge of appropriate prepositional usage (collocations) with specific verbs in English grammar.
2. We need to identify which preposition correctly follows the verb "absolve" when it means to set free from blame or guilt.

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

1. Firstly, let us look at the definition of the verb "absolve":
 - To "absolve" means to formally declare someone free from guilt, obligation, or punishment.
2. Secondly, in standard English grammar, the verb "absolve" is transitively linked to its object using specific prepositions:
 - One is "absolved from" a duty, a charge, or an obligation.
 - One can also be "absolved of" guilt or blame.
 - Both "absolved from" and "absolved of" are grammatically acceptable, depending on the context.
3. Thirdly, let us examine the options provided in this question:
 - Option (A) "from" is given. It is highly correct and idiomatic to say "absolved from all charges".
 - Option (B) "with" is incorrect; we do not say "absolved with charges".
 - Option (C) "at" is incorrect as "at" is a preposition of place or specific time.
 - Option (D) "for" is incorrect because "absolved for" is not the standard legal or grammatical collocation used in this structure.
4. Therefore, "from" is the only correct preposition choice among the options.

Step 3: Final Answer:

1. The correct sentence is: "The suspect was absolved from all charges by the high court."
2. This corresponds directly to Option (A).

Quick Tip: 1. Memorize standard verb-preposition pairs: "absolve from/of", "accuse of", "acquit of", and "exempt from".

2. If both "of" and "from" are standard, check which one is present in the options. Only "from" is present here.

9. Choose the option that correctly identifies the meaning of the word: CACOPHONY

- (A) A harsh, discordant mixture of sounds
- (B) A beautiful, harmonious melody
- (C) A state of complete and total silence
- (D) A soft whisper or gentle murmur

Correct Answer: (A) A harsh, discordant mixture of sounds

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

1. This is a vocabulary question asking us to identify the correct definition of the noun "Cacophony".
2. We can determine the meaning of this word by breaking it down into its Greek linguistic roots.

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

1. Firstly, let us break the word "Cacophony" into its etymological roots:
 - "Caco-" comes from the Greek word *kakos*, which means "bad", "harsh", "unpleasant", or "evil".
 - "-phony" comes from the Greek word *phone*, which means "sound", "voice", or "tone" (as in telephone, symphony, homophone).
 - Combining these roots, "cacophony" literally translates to "bad/harsh sound".
2. Secondly, the formal English definition of "cacophony" is a harsh, discordant, loud, and jarring mixture of sounds that is unpleasant to hear. An example would be the noise of busy city traffic with horns honking and construction drilling.
3. Thirdly, let us analyze why other options are incorrect:

- Option (B) "A beautiful, harmonious melody" is the exact opposite of a cacophony. The correct word for this is "euphony" (where "eu-" means good) or "harmony".
- Option (C) "A state of complete and total silence" is unrelated to sound mixtures. The words for this are "quietude", "silence", or "stillness".
- Option (D) "A soft whisper or gentle murmur" describes quiet, gentle sounds, which is the opposite of a loud, jarring cacophony. The word for this is "susurrus" or "murmur".

Step 3: Final Answer:

1. The correct definition of "cacophony" is a harsh, discordant mixture of sounds.
2. This matches Option (A).

Quick Tip: 1. Remember that the prefix "caco-" always means bad or harsh (e.g., cacography means bad handwriting).

2. The opposite prefix "eu-" always means good or pleasing (e.g., euphony means pleasant sound). This root-word technique makes vocabulary questions much easier to solve.

10. Choose the option that correctly changes this sentence into direct speech:

'She mentioned that she would join us for dinner the following evening.'

- (A) She said, 'I will join you for dinner tomorrow evening.'
- (B) She said, 'I would join you for dinner the following evening.'
- (C) She said, 'She will join us for dinner tomorrow evening.'
- (D) She says, 'I joined you for dinner yesterday evening.'

Correct Answer: (A) She said, 'I will join you for dinner tomorrow evening.'

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

1. This question tests our ability to convert a sentence from Indirect Speech (reported speech) to Direct Speech (quoting the speaker's exact words).

2. To solve this, we must reverse the standard rules of tense changes, pronoun adjustments, and temporal adverb conversions.

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

1. Firstly, let us analyze the elements of the indirect sentence:

- Reporting verb: "She mentioned" (indicates past reporting).
- Subject pronoun in the subordinate clause: "she" (refers to the speaker themselves).
- Verb/Modal: "would join" (indicates a future action reported from a past viewpoint).
- Object pronoun: "us" (refers to the listeners including the reporter).
- Time adverbial: "the following evening" (indicates the day after the speech event).

2. Secondly, let us apply the rules to convert these back to Direct Speech:

- "She mentioned" or "She said" introduces the quotation.
- The pronoun "she" inside the quotation must change to the first-person pronoun "I" because she is referring to herself in the first person.
- The past modal "would" must be reverted to the future tense modal "will" (which represents future intent in direct speech).
- The object pronoun "us" must be changed to "you" because the speaker is directly addressing the group of listeners.
- The time phrase "the following evening" must be reverted to its original direct form, which is "tomorrow evening".

3. Combining all these converted components gives:

She said, "I will join you for dinner tomorrow evening."

4. Thirdly, let us examine why other options are incorrect:

- Option (B) keeps "would" and "the following evening", which are indirect speech forms.
- Option (C) keeps the third-person pronoun "She" and the object pronoun "us", which fails to reflect direct address.
- Option (D) changes the reporting verb to the present tense "says" and uses the past tense "joined" and "yesterday evening", which completely alters the original future meaning of "would join".

Step 3: Final Answer:

1. The correct direct speech equivalent is: She said, 'I will join you for dinner tomorrow evening.'
2. This matches Option (A).

Quick Tip: 1. When converting speech, keep a mental chart of standard transformations:

- would → will

- the following day/evening → tomorrow day/evening

- she (when referring to the speaker) → I

2. Testing the sentence out loud as if you are the speaker often makes the correct direct speech option instantly obvious.