

GRE 2025 Verbal reasoning Sample Paper Set 1

Time Allowed : About 3 hrs 45 mins	Maximum Score : 340 (Verbal+Quant) + 6 (AWA)	Sections : 3 Main + 1 Unscored
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General Instructions

Read the following instructions very carefully and strictly follow them:

1. The GRE General Test has a duration of about 3 hours 45 minutes, divided into six sections (including one unscored/experimental section).
2. The test consists of the following sections:
 - **Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA)** – 2 tasks, 30 minutes each.
 - **Verbal Reasoning** – 2 sections, 20 questions each, 30 minutes per section.
 - **Quantitative Reasoning** – 2 sections, 20 questions each, 35 minutes per section.
 - **Unscored/Research Section** – May appear anytime (not counted in score).
3. Scoring Pattern:
 - Verbal Reasoning: 130–170 (in 1-point increments).
 - Quantitative Reasoning: 130–170 (in 1-point increments).
 - Analytical Writing: 0–6 (in half-point increments).
4. No negative marking is applied in the GRE. Test-takers are advised to attempt all questions.
5. Only an on-screen calculator is allowed for Quantitative Reasoning. No physical calculators, mobile devices, or electronic gadgets are permitted.
6. Breaks: A 10-minute break is provided after the third section; one-minute breaks between other sections.

Verbal Reasoning

1. Question 1 is based on the following reading passage.

Centuries ago, the Maya of Central America produced elaborate, deeply cut carvings in stone. The carvings would have required a cutting tool of hard stone or metal. Iron-ore deposits exist throughout Central America, but apparently the Maya never developed the technology to use them and the metals the Maya are known to have used, copper and gold, would not have been hard enough. Therefore, the Maya must have used stone tools to make these carvings.

1. Select and indicate the best answer from among the five answer choices:

Which of the following, if true, most seriously weakens the argument?

- (A) In various parts of the world, civilizations that could not make iron from ore fashioned tools out of fragments of iron from meteorites.
- (B) All the metallic Mayan artifacts that have been found by archaeologists are made of metals that are too soft for carving stone.
- (C) The stone out of which these carvings were made is harder than the stone used by other Central American peoples.
- (D) The technique that the Maya used to smelt gold and some other metals could not have been easily applied to the task of extracting iron from iron ore.
- (E) Archaeologists disagree about how certain stone tools that have been found among Mayan ruins were used.

Correct Answer: (1) A

Solution:

Step 1: Understand the argument.

The passage argues that since the Maya did not develop iron technology and the metals they used (gold and copper) were too soft, they must have used stone tools for carvings.

Step 2: Identify what would weaken the argument.

To weaken the conclusion, we need evidence that the Maya might have had access to some alternative hard material suitable for carving, other than stone tools.

Step 3: Analyze the options.

- (A): If civilizations without iron technology could use meteorite iron, then the Maya might also have used it. This directly undermines the conclusion that they *must* have used stone. This is the strongest weakening option.
- (B): This supports the argument, since it confirms that Mayan artifacts were of soft metals.
- (C): This makes carvings harder, but it does not weaken the claim that only stone tools were used.
- (D): This explains why they did not use iron, but does not suggest an alternative. It neither weakens nor strengthens.
- (E): Archaeologists disagreeing about tools does not directly challenge the conclusion.

Step 4: Conclusion.

The option that most seriously weakens the argument is (A).

Quick Tip

In critical reasoning questions, look for an answer that introduces an alternative explanation or possibility that challenges the conclusion.

2. The author of the passage suggests that present-day readers would particularly benefit from which of the following changes on the part of present-day writers and critics?

- (A) An increased focus on the importance of engaging the audience in a narrative
- (B) Modernization of the traditional novelistic elements already familiar to readers
- (C) Embracing aspects of fiction that are generally peripheral to the interest of readers
- (D) A greater recognition of how the tradition of the novel has changed over time
- (E) A better understanding of how certain poets such as Eliot have influenced fiction of the present time

Correct Answer: (1) A

Solution:

Step 1: Understand the passage.

The author argues that while writers and critics respect the novel’s tradition, they neglect the urge to tell an “exciting story.”

Step 2: Identify what change would benefit readers.

If readers are to benefit, then writers should focus on storytelling—engaging the audience in a narrative—rather than dismissing it.

Step 3: Eliminate wrong options.

- (B): Modernization is not emphasized.
- (C): Peripheral aspects are irrelevant.
- (D): Recognition of tradition’s change is not the focus.
- (E): Influence of poets like Eliot is not central.

Step 4: Conclusion.

The correct answer is (A): focusing on engaging storytelling.

Quick Tip

When analyzing reading comprehension questions, look for the option that directly addresses the author’s criticism or suggestion in the passage.

3. The word “address” appears underlined and in boldface twice in the first sentence of the passage (lines 2–5). In the context of the passage as a whole, “address” is closest in meaning to:

- (A) reveal
- (B) belie
- (C) speak to

- (D) direct attention toward
- (E) attempt to remediate

Correct Answer: (3) C

Solution:

Step 1: Interpret the sentence.

The sentence says that “a new style of writing” is required to “address a world undergoing transformation.” Here, “address” means to deal with or speak to the needs of that world.

Step 2: Analyze options.

- (A) Reveal = show, not the right sense.
- (B) Belie = contradict, incorrect.
- (C) Speak to = matches perfectly, meaning to deal with.
- (D) Direct attention toward = too narrow, implies pointing only.
- (E) Attempt to remediate = implies fixing, too strong.

Step 3: Conclusion.

Thus, the best meaning is (C) “speak to.”

Quick Tip

In vocabulary-in-context questions, always replace the word with each option in the passage. The one that best preserves meaning is correct.

4. Which of the following, if true, most helps to explain why the time spent washing clothes increased in rural areas after the introduction of electric washing machines?

- (A) People with access to an electric washing machine typically wore their clothes many fewer times before washing them than did people without access to electric washing machines.
- (B) Households that had sent their clothes to professional laundries before 1925 were more likely than other households to purchase an electric washing machine when they became available.
- (C) People living in urban households that had previously sent their clothes to professional laundries typically owned more clothes than did people living in rural households.
- (D) The earliest electric washing machines required the user to spend much more time beside the machine than do modern electric washing machines.
- (E) In the 1920s and 1930s the proportion of rural households with electricity was smaller than the proportion of urban households with electricity.

Correct Answer: (1) A

Solution:**Step 1: Identify the paradox.**

Even though washing machines made washing clothes faster, total time increased in rural households.

Step 2: Look for explanation.

If people washed clothes more frequently (because clothes were worn fewer times before washing), the total time spent could still increase.

Step 3: Analyze options.

- (A): Explains the paradox perfectly—frequency increased.
- (B): Refers to urban households, irrelevant.
- (C): Compares urban vs rural clothing ownership, not the issue.
- (D): Earliest machines requiring more attention increases time per load, but frequency is the stronger explanation.
- (E): Access differences don't explain why those who had machines spent more time.

Step 4: Conclusion.

Hence, (A) best explains the increase.

Quick Tip

In paradox questions, the correct option usually introduces a new factor (like frequency or behavior) that resolves the seeming contradiction.

5. In the 1950s, the country's inhabitants were ____: most of them knew very little about foreign countries.

- (A) partisan
- (B) erudite
- (C) insular
- (D) cosmopolitan
- (E) imperturbable

Correct Answer: (3) C

Solution:**Step 1: Look at the context.**

The sentence says people “knew very little about foreign countries.” That suggests narrow outlook or inward-looking attitude.

Step 2: Match options.

- (A) Partisan = biased in favor of a cause, not relevant.

- (B) Erudite = highly knowledgeable, opposite meaning.
- (C) Insular = isolated, inward-looking, matches perfectly.
- (D) Cosmopolitan = worldly, opposite meaning.
- (E) Imperturbable = calm, unrelated.

Step 3: Conclusion.

Thus, the correct word is (C) insular.

Quick Tip

Always use context clues (like “knew very little about foreign countries”) to identify the precise word.

6. Since she believed him to be both candid and trustworthy, she refused to consider the possibility that his statement had been -----.

- (A) irrelevant
- (B) facetious
- (C) mistaken
- (D) critical
- (E) insincere

Correct Answer: (5) E

Solution:

Step 1: Understand the context.

She believed the person to be “candid and trustworthy.” If one is candid and trustworthy, then the opposite possibility would be dishonesty or lack of sincerity.

Step 2: Match options.

- (A) Irrelevant = off-topic, does not fit.
- (B) Facetious = joking, not serious, but not the opposite of candid/trustworthy.
- (C) Mistaken = incorrect by accident, does not fit the “trustworthy” contrast.
- (D) Critical = judgmental, irrelevant.
- (E) Insincere = dishonest, directly opposite of candid and trustworthy.

Step 3: Conclusion.

Therefore, the best fit is (E) insincere.

Quick Tip

In sentence completion, look for logical contrast words like “refused to consider.” They often signal the opposite quality.

7. It is his dubious distinction to have proved what nobody would think of denying, that Romero at the age of sixty-four writes with all the characteristics of -----.

- (A) maturity
- (B) fiction
- (C) inventiveness
- (D) art
- (E) brilliance

Correct Answer: (1) A

Step 1: Analyze the tone.

The phrase “dubious distinction” indicates irony. The idea is that proving something obvious is not a real achievement.

Step 2: Match options.

At age sixty-four, the most obvious trait is “maturity.”

- (A) Maturity: fits perfectly.
- (B) Fiction: nonsensical.
- (C) Inventiveness: not obvious at an older age.
- (D) Art: vague.
- (E) Brilliance: too evaluative, not the point of the irony.

Step 3: Conclusion.

The correct answer is (A) maturity.

Quick Tip

When a sentence uses irony like “dubious distinction,” the answer is usually something trivial or obvious.

Questions 8 through 11 are based on the following reading passage.

In the 1970s, two debates engaged many scholars of early United States history. One focused on the status of women, primarily White women. Turning on the so-called golden age theory, which posited that during the eighteenth-century colonial era, American women enjoyed a brief period of high status relative to their English contemporaries and to nineteenth-century

American women, this debate pitted scholars who believed women's lives deteriorated after 1800 against those who thought women's lives had been no better before 1800. At issue were the causes of women's subordination: were these causes already in place when the English first settled North America or did they emerge with the rise of nineteenth-century industrial capitalism?

The second debate, the so-called origins debate, concerned the emergence of racial slavery in the southern colonies: was slavery the inevitable result of the deep-rooted racial prejudice of early British colonists or did racial prejudice arise only after these planters instituted slave labor?

Although these debates are parallel in some respects, key differences distinguished them. Whereas the debate over women's status revolved around implicit comparisons of colonial women to their counterparts in the antebellum period (1800–1860), thus inviting comment from scholars of both historical periods, the origins debate was primarily confined to a discussion about slavery in colonial America. Second, in contrast to the newness of the debate over women's status and its continued currency throughout the early 1980s, the debate over race and slavery, begun in the 1950s, had lost some of its urgency with the publication of Morgan's *American Slavery, American Freedom* (1975), widely regarded as the last word on the subject.

Each debate also assumed a different relationship to the groups whose histories it concerned. In its heyday, the origins debate focused mainly on White attitudes toward Africans rather than on Africans themselves. With few exceptions, such as Wood's *Black Majority* (1974) and Mullin's *Flight and Rebellion* (1972), which were centrally concerned with enslaved African men, most works pertaining to the origins debate focused on the White architects, mostly male, of racial slavery. In contrast, although women's historians were interested in the institutions and ideologies contributing to women's subordination, they were equally concerned with documenting women's experiences. As in the origins debate, however, early scholarship on colonial women defined its historical constituency narrowly, women's historians focusing mainly on affluent White women.

Over time, however, some initial differences between the approaches taken by scholars in the two fields faded. In the 1980s, historians of race and slavery in colonial America shifted their attention to enslaved people; interest in African American culture grew, thereby bringing enslaved women more prominently into view. Historians of early American women moved in similar directions during the decade and began to consider the effect of racial difference on women's experience.

8. The passage is primarily concerned with:

- (A) Showing how historians who were engaged in a particular debate influenced historians engaged in another debate
- (B) Explaining why two initially parallel scholarly debates diverged in the 1980s
- (C) Comparing two scholarly debates and discussing their histories
- (D) Contrasting the narrow focus of one scholarly debate with the somewhat broader focus of another
- (E) Evaluating the relative merits of the approaches used by historians engaged in two over-

lapping scholarly debates

Correct Answer: (3) C

Solution:

Step 1: Identify the purpose of the passage.

The passage describes two debates: one about women's status and one about the origins of racial slavery. It outlines their content, scope, differences, and evolution.

Step 2: Evaluate options.

- (A): Influence is not the focus.
- (B): The debates did not diverge in the 1980s; they actually became similar.
- (C): Correct, the passage compares and traces their histories.
- (D): Contrast alone is not enough; the passage does more.
- (E): No evaluation of merits, just description.

Step 3: Conclusion.

Hence, the answer is (C).

Quick Tip

For "main idea" questions, focus on what the entire passage accomplishes, not just one paragraph.

9. It can be inferred that the author of the passage mentions *American Slavery, American Freedom* in the second paragraph primarily in order to:

- (A) Substantiate a point about the methodology that came to be prevalent among scholars engaged in the origins debate
- (B) Cite a major influence on those scholars who claimed that racial prejudice preceded the institution of slavery in colonial America
- (C) Show that some scholars who were engaged in the origins debate prior to the 1980s were interested in the experiences of enslaved people
- (D) Identify a reason for a certain difference in the late 1970s between the origins debate and the debate over American women's status
- (E) Contrast the kind of work produced by scholars engaged in the origins debate with the kind produced by scholars engaged in the debate over American women's status

Correct Answer: (4) D

Solution:

Step 1: Recall the passage.

The text says the origins debate lost urgency after the publication of Morgan's *American Slavery, American Freedom*, which was regarded as the "last word" on the subject.

Step 2: Match options.

- (A): Not about methodology.
- (B): Not framed as influence on prejudice claims.
- (C): Not about enslaved people's experiences.
- (D): Correct—explains why the origins debate had declined in urgency compared to the women's debate.
- (E): No such contrast is made here.

Step 3: Conclusion.

Answer is (D).

Quick Tip

When a specific book is cited in a passage, ask: is it an example, evidence, or explanation? Here, it explains the decline in urgency of a debate.

10. The passage suggests which of the following about the women's historians mentioned in the third paragraph?

- (A) They disputed certain claims regarding the status of eighteenth-century American women relative to women in England during the same period.
- (B) Their approach to the study of women's subordination had been partly influenced by earlier studies published by some scholars engaged in the origins debate.
- (C) Their work focused on the experiences of both White and African American women.
- (D) Their approach resembled the approach taken in studies by Wood and by Mullin in that they were interested in the experiences of people subjected to a system of subordination.
- (E) To some extent, they concurred with Wood and with Mullin about the origins of racism in colonial America.

Correct Answer: (4) D

Solution:

Step 1: Recall the third paragraph.

It says women's historians studied institutions and ideologies but were equally concerned with women's actual experiences.

Step 2: Compare with Wood and Mullin.

Wood's and Mullin's works focused on enslaved people's experiences. Both approaches highlight the lived experiences of subordinated groups.

Step 3: Analyze options.

- (A): Not stated.
- (B): No direct influence mentioned.
- (C): They focused mainly on affluent White women, not both races.
- (D): Correct, both studied lived experiences under subordination.
- (E): Racism origins not connected here.

Step 4: Conclusion.

Answer is (D).

Quick Tip

When a passage mentions multiple groups of historians, look for parallels in their research focus to answer comparison questions.

11. According to the passage, historical studies of race and slavery in early America that were produced during the 1980s differed from studies of that subject produced prior to the 1980s in that the studies produced during the 1980s:

- (A) gave more attention to the experiences of enslaved women
- (B) gave less attention to the cultures of enslaved people
- (C) were read by more scholars in other fields
- (D) were more concerned with the institutions and ideologies that perpetuated racial prejudice in postcolonial America
- (E) made direct comparisons between the subordination of White women and the subordination of African American people

Correct Answer: (1) A

Solution:**Step 1: Recall the relevant passage portion.**

The last paragraph of the passage notes that in the 1980s, historians of race and slavery “shifted their attention to enslaved people; interest in African American culture grew, thereby bringing enslaved women more prominently into view.”

Step 2: Compare with pre-1980s scholarship.

Earlier works (before the 1980s) focused primarily on White architects of slavery and on White attitudes toward Africans, with limited attention to enslaved people themselves. Only exceptions, such as Wood and Mullin, highlighted enslaved men.

Step 3: Analyze options.

- (A): Correct—1980s scholarship brought enslaved women into focus.
- (B): Incorrect—attention to enslaved cultures actually increased, not decreased.

- (C): No mention of readership across fields.
- (D): Incorrect—the passage describes ideologies of subordination for women’s historians, not specifically for slavery in postcolonial America.
- (E): Incorrect—no such direct comparisons are described.

Step 4: Conclusion.

The key difference is (A): more attention to enslaved women.

Quick Tip

When comparing scholarship “before vs. after” a certain period, underline what changed in the final paragraph—it usually points directly to the correct answer.

Directions for questions 12 through 17:

Each of the following questions includes a short text with two or three blanks, each blank indicating that something has been omitted. Select one entry for each blank from the corresponding column of choices. Fill all blanks in the way that best completes the text.

12. The narratives that vanquished peoples have created of their defeat have, according to Schivelbusch, fallen into several identifiable types. In one of these, the vanquished manage to (i) _____ the victor’s triumph as the result of some spurious advantage, the victors being truly inferior where it counts. Often the winners (ii) _____ this interpretation, worrying about the cultural or moral costs of their triumph and so giving some credence to the losers’ story.

Blank (i)

- (A) construe
- (B) anoint
- (C) collude in

Blank (ii)

- (D) take issue with
- (E) acknowledge
- (F) disregard

Correct Answer: (i) A – construe, (ii) E – acknowledge

Solution:

Step 1: Analyze Blank (i).

The losers interpret the victors’ triumph as based on some false advantage. The word “construe” (interpret) fits. “Anoint” (bless) does not fit, and “collude in” makes no sense here.

Step 2: Analyze Blank (ii).

The winners “worry about cultural or moral costs,” so they give some credence to the losers’ interpretation. This means they “acknowledge” it. “Take issue with” (oppose) and “disregard” (ignore) are the opposite of what is described.

Step 3: Conclusion.

The best completion is: construe ... acknowledge.

Quick Tip

For Text Completion, always check if the second blank “agrees” or “contrasts” with the first statement—this ensures logical consistency.

13. I’ve long anticipated this retrospective of the artist’s work, hoping that it would make (i) ----- judgments about him possible, but greater familiarity with his paintings highlights their inherent (ii) ----- and actually makes one’s assessment (iii) -----.

Blank (i)

- (A) modish
- (B) settled
- (C) detached

Blank (ii)

- (D) gloom
- (E) ambiguity
- (F) delicacy

Blank (iii)

- (G) similarly equivocal
- (H) less sanguine
- (I) more cynical

Correct Answer: (i) B – settled, (ii) E – ambiguity, (iii) G – similarly equivocal

Solution:**Step 1: Blank (i).**

The author hoped the retrospective would lead to firm, final judgments. “Settled” fits. “Modish” (fashionable) and “detached” do not.

Step 2: Blank (ii).

Instead, the paintings show “ambiguity.” “Gloom” and “delicacy” do not match.

Step 3: Blank (iii).

Because of the ambiguity, one's assessment remains "equivocal" (uncertain). Thus "similarly equivocal" is correct.

Quick Tip

In multi-blank questions, test the blanks together in context. The correct set creates a smooth, logical flow.

14. Stories are a haunted genre; hardly (i) _____ kind of story, the ghost story is almost the paradigm of the form, and (ii) _____ was undoubtedly one effect that Poe had in mind when he wrote about how stories work.

Blank (i)

- (A) a debased
- (B) a normative
- (C) a meticulous

Blank (ii)

- (D) pessimism
- (E) goosebumps
- (F) curiosity

Correct Answer: (i) A – a debased, (ii) E – goosebumps

Solution:**Step 1: Blank (i).**

The ghost story is "almost the paradigm of the form." That means it is far from being debased (corrupt or low). So "a debased" fits because the author is rejecting that idea.

Step 2: Blank (ii).

What effect did Poe aim for? Clearly the sensation of fear or chills—"goosebumps."

Step 3: Conclusion.

The correct pair is: a debased . . . goosebumps.

Quick Tip

Look for words like "hardly" — they signal contrast, which helps identify the correct blank.

15. Given how (i) _____ the shortcomings of the standard economic model are in its portrayal of human behavior, the failure of many economists to respond to them is astonishing. They continue to fill the journals with yet more proofs of yet more (ii) _____ theorems. Others, by contrast, accept the criticisms as a challenge, seeking to expand the basic model to embrace a wider range of things people do.

Blank (i)

- (A) overlooked
- (B) occasional
- (C) patent

Blank (ii)

- (D) comprehensive
- (E) improbable
- (F) pervasive

Correct Answer: (i) C – patent, (ii) E – improbable

Solution:

Step 1: Blank (i).

The shortcomings are “astonishing” to ignore. This suggests they are obvious. “Patent” (obvious) is correct. “Overlooked” and “occasional” do not fit.

Step 2: Blank (ii).

The economists continue to prove unrealistic theorems. “Improbable” fits. “Comprehensive” and “pervasive” do not fit the tone.

Step 3: Conclusion.

The answer is: patent ... improbable.

Quick Tip

In Text Completion, look for evaluative clues like “astonishing”—they tell you whether the missing word should be positive, negative, or extreme.

16. The playwright’s approach is (i) _____ in that her works (ii) _____ the theatrical devices normally used to create drama on the stage.

- (A) pedestrian
- (B) startling
- (C) celebrated

- (D) jettison
- (E) experiment with
- (F) distill

Correct Answer: (i) B – startling, (ii) D – jettison

Solution:

Step 1: Understand the sentence.

The playwright is unusual or unconventional because she avoids the usual theatrical devices. This requires a strong, surprising description.

Step 2: Blank (i).

“Startling” means surprising or unconventional, which fits perfectly. “Pedestrian” means ordinary, the opposite of what is meant. “Celebrated” is too neutral.

Step 3: Blank (ii).

She rejects or discards traditional devices. “Jettison” means to throw away or abandon—exactly right. “Experiment with” means still using them, which contradicts the idea. “Distill” means refine, not reject.

Step 4: Conclusion.

Thus, the correct pair is: startling ... jettison.

Quick Tip

Words like “in that” signal explanation. The second blank often clarifies why the first blank word was chosen.

17. Scientists are not the only persons who examine the world about them by the use of rational processes, although they sometimes (i) _____ this impression by extending the definition of “scientist” to include anyone who is (ii) _____ in his or her investigational practices.

Blank (i)

- (A) conceal
- (B) create
- (C) undermine

Blank (ii)

- (D) intuitive
- (E) haphazard
- (F) logical

Correct Answer: (i) B – create, (ii) F – logical

Solution:

Step 1: Analyze the contrast.

The opening says: “Scientists are not the only persons who examine the world by rational processes.” But they sometimes give the opposite impression by broadening the definition of “scientist.”

Step 2: Blank (i).

They sometimes “create” this impression. “Conceal” and “undermine” do not logically fit the sentence.

Step 3: Blank (ii).

The definition is broadened to include anyone who is rational. So the right word is “logical.” “Intuitive” and “haphazard” are opposites of rational.

Step 4: Conclusion.

Therefore, the correct pair is: create . . . logical.

Quick Tip

When a sentence contrasts two groups (e.g., scientists vs. others), the blanks usually reinforce that contrast—look for logical consistency.

Questions 18 and 19 are based on the following reading passage.

(A part of one sentence is shown underlined and in boldface for reference in answering question 18, and a word is shown underlined and in boldface for reference in answering question 19.)

The most plausible justification for higher taxes on automobile fuel is that fuel consumption harms the environment and thus adds to the costs of traffic congestion. But the fact that burning fuel creates these “negative externalities” does not imply that no tax on fuel could ever be too high. Economics is precise about the tax that should, in principle, be levied to deal with negative externalities: **the tax on a liter of fuel should be equal to the harm caused by using a liter of fuel.** If the tax is more than that, its costs (including the inconvenience to those who would rather have used their cars) will **exceed** its benefits (including any reduction in congestion and pollution).

18. Which of the following best characterizes the function of the underlined and boldfaced partial sentence in lines 7-8 of the passage?

- (A) It restates a point made earlier in the passage.
- (B) It provides the evidence on which a theory is based.
- (C) It presents a specific application of a general principle.
- (D) It summarizes a justification with which the author disagrees.

(E) It suggests that the benefits of a particular strategy have been overestimated.

Correct Answer: (D) It summarizes a justification with which the author disagrees.

Solution:

Step 1: Understand the context of the question.

The question asks about the purpose of a specific sentence in the passage. We must analyze the role that sentence plays. Based on the context, it seems to summarize a viewpoint that is later disagreed with.

Step 2: Analyze the options.

- (A): A restatement would not necessarily be followed by disagreement.
- (B): The sentence is not providing direct evidence for a theory.
- (C): It's not applying a principle, but discussing a justification.
- (D): This is likely correct if the sentence presents a justification the author later refutes.
- (E): Overestimating benefits is a plausible interpretation but doesn't fit the structure of disagreement.

Step 3: Conclusion.

The correct answer is (D) as the sentence likely presents a justification the author rejects.

Quick Tip

When the passage discusses a justification with which the author disagrees, it often includes a rebuttal or critique right after.

19. The word “exceed” appears underlined and boldfaced in line 10 of the passage. In the context in which it appears, “exceed” most nearly means:

- (A) outstrip
- (B) magnify
- (C) delimit
- (D) offset
- (E) supplant

Correct Answer: (A) outstrip

Solution:

Step 1: Examine the word in context.

The word “exceed” refers to something surpassing or going beyond a limit. The word must imply surpassing in amount, value, or degree.

Step 2: Analyze the options.

- (A) Outstrip = to surpass or go beyond, which fits the context.
- (B) Magnify = to increase in size, which doesn't fit with "exceed."
- (C) Delimit = to define boundaries, opposite of exceeding.
- (D) Offset = to counterbalance, unrelated.
- (E) Supplant = to replace, not the same as exceeding.

Step 3: Conclusion.

Thus, the correct word is (A) outstrip, meaning to surpass.

Quick Tip

When a word like "exceed" appears, look for context indicating surpassing in amount, degree, or number. "Outstrip" fits best in such cases.

Questions 20 and 21 are based on the following reading passage. (A two-word phrase is shown underlined and in boldface for reference in answering question 21.)

Objectively, of course, the various ecosystems that sustain life on the planet proceed independently of human agency, just as they operated before the hectic ascendancy of **Homo sapiens**. But it is also true that it is difficult to think of a single such system that has not, for better or worse, been substantially modified by human culture. Nor is this simply the work of the industrial centuries. It has been happening since the days of ancient Mesopotamia. It is **coeval with** the origins of writing, and has occurred throughout our social existence. And it is this irreversibly modified world, from the polar caps to the equatorial forests, that is all the nature we have.

20. Consider each of the three choices separately and select all that apply. It can be inferred from the passage that the author would agree with which of the following statements?

- (A) Over time, the impact of human culture on the natural world has been largely benign.
- (B) It is a mistake to think that the natural world contains many areas of pristine wilderness.
- (C) The only substantial effects that human agency has had on ecosystems have been inadvertent.

Correct Answer: (B) It is a mistake to think that the natural world contains many areas of pristine wilderness.

Solution:

Step 1: Interpret the passage.

The passage critiques the view that there are untouched natural areas. The author suggests that human activity has already impacted most areas of nature.

Step 2: Analyze the options.

- (A): The passage does not suggest human culture has been “largely benign” to nature.
- (B): Correct, the author would agree that many areas are not pristine.
- (C): This doesn’t align with the passage’s view on human impact, which is broader.

Step 3: Conclusion.

Thus, the correct answer is (B).

Quick Tip

For “inference” questions, look for statements that align with the overall critique or argument made in the passage.

21. The phrase “coeval with” appears underlined and in boldface in lines 7-8 of the passage. In the context in which it appears, “coeval with” most nearly means:

- (A) influenced by
- (B) older than
- (C) coincident with
- (D) unimpeded by
- (E) similar to

Correct Answer: (C) coincident with

Solution:

Step 1: Understand the phrase “coeval with.”

The phrase means existing or happening at the same time as something else, which is closest to “coincident with.”

Step 2: Analyze the options.

- (A): “Influenced by” doesn’t fit the idea of being contemporary or simultaneous.
- (B): “Older than” is the opposite of what “coeval” implies.
- (C): Correct, “coeval with” means contemporaneous or coincident in time.
- (D): “Unimpeded by” has no relation to the concept of time.
- (E): “Similar to” is too vague and not time-related.

Step 3: Conclusion.

Thus, the correct answer is (C).

Quick Tip

When encountering specific terms like "coeval with," focus on the meaning of simultaneity or co-existence in time.

22. Dreams are _____ in and of themselves, but, when combined with other data, they can tell us much about the dreamer.

- (A) astonishing
- (B) disordered
- (C) harmless
- (D) inscrutable
- (E) revealing
- (F) uninformative

Correct Answer: (D) inscrutable, (F) uninformative

Solution:

Step 1: Interpret the context.

The passage suggests that dreams on their own are hard to interpret, but when combined with other data, they reveal much. Therefore, words like "inscrutable" and "uninformative" fit well.

Step 2: Analyze the options.

- (A): "Astonishing" does not fit because it refers to surprise rather than difficulty in understanding.
- (B): "Disordered" is not correct because the sentence doesn't suggest confusion.
- (C): "Harmless" doesn't fit the context of analysis.
- (D): "Inscrutable" (hard to understand) fits perfectly.
- (E): "Revealing" contradicts the idea of being unclear by itself.
- (F): "Uninformative" fits because it suggests dreams alone don't provide much insight.

Step 3: Conclusion.

The best answers are (D) inscrutable and (F) uninformative.

Quick Tip

When dealing with descriptions of things that need further data to make sense, words like "inscrutable" or "uninformative" are often correct.

23. Linguistic science confirms what experienced users of ASL—American Sign Language—have always implicitly known: ASL is a grammatically _____ language,

as capable of expressing a full range of syntactic relations as any natural spoken language.

- (A) complete
- (B) economical
- (C) redundant
- (D) spare
- (E) unique
- (F) unlimited

Correct Answer: (A) complete, (F) unlimited

Solution:

Step 1: Understand the context.

The passage highlights ASL's ability to express a wide range of syntactic relations, suggesting a fully functional language. "Complete" and "unlimited" fit perfectly.

Step 2: Analyze the options.

- (A): "Complete" is correct as it implies the language has all necessary elements.
- (B): "Economical" doesn't fit because it focuses on efficiency, not completeness.
- (C): "Redundant" implies excess, which is the opposite of the intended meaning.
- (D): "Spare" implies minimal, which contradicts the idea of a fully capable language.
- (E): "Unique" doesn't express the full capacity of the language.
- (F): "Unlimited" fits well as it suggests no boundaries to ASL's expressiveness.

Step 3: Conclusion.

The correct answers are (A) complete and (F) unlimited.

Quick Tip

For phrases about the capability of languages, focus on terms that suggest full functionality, like "complete" or "unlimited."

24. The macromolecule RNA is common to all living beings, and DNA, which is found in all organisms except some bacteria, is almost as ____.

- (A) comprehensive
- (B) fundamental
- (C) inclusive
- (D) universal
- (E) significant
- (F) ubiquitous

Correct Answer: (D) universal, (F) ubiquitous

Solution:

Step 1: Understand the context.

The passage compares RNA, which is common to all living organisms, with DNA, which is also almost universal, excluding a few exceptions.

Step 2: Analyze the options.

- (A): “Comprehensive” is not fitting because it implies coverage of all aspects, which is not the intended meaning.
- (B): “Fundamental” doesn’t capture the idea of being universally present.
- (C): “Inclusive” is too weak to express universal presence.
- (D): “Universal” fits perfectly, meaning present everywhere.
- (E): “Significant” doesn’t work because it refers to importance, not presence.
- (F): “Ubiquitous” also fits as it implies being everywhere.

Step 3: Conclusion.

Both “universal” and “ubiquitous” fit well.

Quick Tip

When discussing something that is present everywhere, “universal” or “ubiquitous” are often the best choices.

25. Early critics of Emily Dickinson’s poetry mistook for simplemindedness the surface of artlessness that in fact she constructed with ____.

- (A) astonishment
- (B) craft
- (C) cunning
- (D) innocence
- (E) naïveté
- (F) vexation

Correct Answer: (B) craft, (C) cunning

Solution:

Step 1: Understand the context.

The passage discusses how critics misjudged Dickinson’s poetry, mistaking its artlessness for simplicity, when it was actually crafted with skill and strategy.

Step 2: Analyze the options.

- (A): “Astonishment” doesn’t fit, as it implies surprise rather than skill.

- (B): “Craft” fits because it refers to the skillful creation of the poetry.
- (C): “Cunning” fits well because it suggests cleverness and intentional design.
- (D): “Innocence” doesn’t work because it doesn’t imply strategy.
- (E): “Naïveté” refers to being inexperienced or simple, which is incorrect.
- (F): “Vexation” is unrelated to the idea of strategy or skill.

Step 3: Conclusion.

The correct answers are (B) craft and (C) cunning.

Quick Tip

Look for words that suggest intentional design or skill when discussing artistic creation.