

Verbal and Reading Review

Analogies

An analogy is a comparison of two proportions or relations. In standard usage—and for many of the military exams—you will encounter several types of analogies.

Why are analogies important? Understanding analogies exhibits your ability to recognize relationships between words. It helps you develop a more complete ability to use words, images, and expressions, both in your spoken words and in your writing. As a future officer in the military, it's important for you to be articulate, now and when you are commanding others.

Each question presents two words that have some type of relationship; you are asked to select the choice that best completes the analogy, which is similar to the relationship presented in the original pair of words. There are two formats for the questions. For example, look at the following:

FORK is to EAT as PEN is to

- A. INK
- B. PENCIL
- C. WRITE
- D. LETTER
- E. BOOK

You first must ask yourself what the relationship is between FORK and EAT. A fork is used to eat. Thus, the next pair demonstrates a similar relationship—a PEN is used to WRITE. The correct answer is C.

Here's another sample question.

PLUM is to FRUIT as STEAK is to

- A. MEAL
- B. DINNER
- C. VEAL
- D. COW
- E. BEEF

Although many of these choices sound correct, let's analyze them. A plum is fruit. A steak can be a meal, but not necessarily the entire meal. A steak can be dinner, but it can also be lunch. A steak is not veal, so that's incorrect. A steak comes from a cow, but it's only part of a cow. The most obvious answer would be E, BEEF. This answer establishes the same relationship between PLUM and FRUIT as STEAK and BEEF.

The second format of analogy questions that you will encounter is as follows:

PREMIER is to COUNTRY as

- A. TEACHER is to LEARNING
- B. PRINCIPAL is to SCHOOL
- C. PRESIDENT is to CABINET
- D. SOLDIER is to SAILOR
- E. POLICEMAN is to CRIME

The correct answer is **B**, PRINCIPAL is to SCHOOL. The PREMIER is the leader of the COUNTRY, and the PRINCIPAL is the leader of the SCHOOL. If you look at the other choices, you can see the differences in relationships when compared to the original pair. The teacher’s job is to help the students learn, and he or she is surely in charge of students, but that is not the direct relationship. The President chooses the Cabinet, but the Cabinet is only a small part of the country. Soldier to Sailor and Policeman to Crime are different relationships entirely.

Keep in mind that the relationship between the words is the most important aspect when answering an analogy question. *It is more important than the actual meanings of the words.* Try to establish the relationship immediately as you read the question. How are the two words related? Are they the same? Are they part of a group? Are they antonyms? It is often helpful to paraphrase the relationship.

For example, you might encounter the following:

FISH is to OCEAN as HORSE is to

- A. OATS
- B. RACETRACK**
- C. STABLE
- D. GALLOP
- E. FIELD

You would paraphrase this by saying, “A FISH lives in the OCEAN; therefore, a HORSE lives in the STABLE.” The correct answer is **C**. Although some horses may live in the field, city horses may live only in a stable. (Questions usually require you to be fairly specific.) By paraphrasing the original pair, you help yourself in identifying the correct answer.

Here’s one that requires even more specific attention.

BAT is to BASEBALL, as

- A. PASS is to FOOTBALL
- B. CLUB is to GOLF**
- C. BALL is to TENNIS
- D. SPIKES is to SLIDE
- E. CARDS is to POKER

You would say, “A BAT is used in BASEBALL.” Then again, A CLUB is used in GOLF, a BALL is used in TENNIS, and CARDS are used in POKER. You can eliminate the PASS since this is not an *object* used in the game. SPIKES is to SLIDE is an entirely different relationship—you wear SPIKES in a game, but they are not necessarily used to SLIDE. How do you narrow down your choices? You do this by becoming more specific. You would now paraphrase this by saying “A BAT is used to hit a ball in the game of BASEBALL.” Choice **B** now becomes the logical selection, because a CLUB is used to hit a ball in the game of GOLF.

Make sure that you start by eliminating those choices that do not express a clear relationship to the original pair. This will make selecting the correct pair somewhat easier by narrowing down the number of choices. Also be careful of choices with similar words that might be included just to trip you up. If the choice sounds too similar to the original pair, it’s probably incorrect and is being used by the test-developer as a “distracter.”

Classification of Analogies

Dozens of different types of analogies exist, defined based on their relationships. However, we’ll just cover a few of the major types, because these are the most common types of questions you’ll find on the test.

Synonyms

As you should know, synonyms are words that have similar meanings and are usually from the same part of speech.

DOWDY is to DRAB as

- A. QUIET is to DEN
- B. SAFETY is to STELLAR
- C. OBJECTIVE is to DISPASSIONATE
- D. PETTY is to ELEPHANTINE
- E. RECREATION is to TOYS

The correct answer is **C**. A synonym for **dowdy** is **drab**. One who is **objective** is **dispassionate**.

Antonyms

Antonyms are words that have opposite meanings.

HAPPY is to SAD as RIGID is to

- A. FAULTY
- B. TIGHT
- C. CONSERVATIVE
- D. ALTRUISTIC
- E. FLEXIBLE

The correct answer is **E**. **Rigid** means still and unyielding. The opposite is **flexible**.

Function

What is the purpose, or function, of the relationship?

HAMMER is to NAIL as

- A. CAR is to WHEEL
- B. GLUE is to TUBE
- C. KNIFE is to SHARP
- D. SCISSORS is to PAPER
- E. PEN is to INK

The correct answer is **D**. The function of a **hammer** is to hit a **nail**, and the function of a **scissors** is to cut **paper**.

Part to Whole

In this type of analogy, the first word in the pair is part of the second word. It can also be used in an opposite manner.

DANCERS is to TROUPE as

- A. SINGERS is to CHORUS
- B. WRITERS is to BOOKS
- C. SENATORS is to REPRESENTATIVES
- D. TEACHERS is to PROFESSORS
- E. PILOTS is to JETS

Dancers are part of a **troupe**, and **singers** are part of a **chorus**. The correct answer is **A**. If you analyze each of the answers, you'll see that although the first and second choices are related, they are not parts-to-whole relationships.

Definition

This is similar to synonyms. The first word is the definition of the second word.

SANCTUARY is to REFUGE as

- A. CAVE is to BEAR
- B. VAULT is to VALUABLES
- C. TRIUMPH is to CONTEST
- D. STRIATION is to STRIPE
- E. CARNIVORE is OMNIVORE

The correct answer is **D**. A **striation** is **stripe**. None of the other choices are definitions of each other.

Type

One word in the pair represents a type of the second word. For example, MAPLE is a type of TREE, SEDAN is a type of CAR, and ROBIN is a type of BIRD.

ARGON is to GAS as

- A. BOOK is to LIBRARY
- B. GESSO is to PAINT
- C. HEART is to PACEMAKER
- D. PAUPER is to MONEY
- E. COMPUTER is to KEYBOARD

The correct answer is **B**. **Gesso** is a type of **paint**. These are sometimes known as “Member and Class” analogies.

Dozens of other types of analogies actually exist—some very sophisticated and some fairly simple. To learn how to solve analogies, you must spend the time on the practice problems, study the material presented previously, and try to identify the types of pairs in each question. Analyze them and take your time with these questions in order to be familiar with the different types of analogies and to be able to recognize them quickly when you take the test.

Analogy Practice Questions

Try these practice questions.

1. TOOL is to DRILL as POEM is to

- A. SONG
- B. MACHINE
- C. SONNET
- D. BIRD
- E. NOVEL

2. TALK is to SHOUT as DISLIKE is to

- A. SCREAM
- B. DETEST
- C. FRIGHTEN
- D. CONTRIBUTE
- E. ADMIRE

- 3.** CONDUCTOR is to ORCHESTRA as SHEPHERD is to
- A. FILM
 - B. CANINE
 - C. CONTROL
 - D. FLOCK
 - E. GENERAL
- 4.** OBSTINATE is to COMPLIANT as OBLIVIOUS is to
- A. CONSCIOUS
 - B. CAREFREE
 - C. FORGETFUL
 - D. INTUITIVE
 - E. NATURAL
- 5.** BOUQUET is to VASE as GARBAGE is to
- A. URN
 - B. ABDOMEN
 - C. CENTERPIECE
 - D. SEWER
 - E. CARTON
- 6.** TENSION is to STRESS as VIRUS is to
- A. LIVING
 - B. DISEASE
 - C. BACTERIA
 - D. IMMUNITY
 - E. MORBIDITY
- 7.** BAROMETER is to PRESSURE as CALIPERS is to
- A. CUTTING
 - B. HEIGHT
 - C. CONSTANCY
 - D. THICKNESS
 - E. PLIERS
- 8.** MISER is to MONEY as GLUTTON is to
- A. FOOD
 - B. ENVY
 - C. LITERATURE
 - D. PUNISHMENT
 - E. NUTRIENTS
- 9.** PRIDE is to HUMBLE as HUMOR is to
- A. INTELLECTUAL
 - B. ENERGETIC
 - C. SOMBER
 - D. SERVILE
 - E. LUDICROUS
- 10.** CANDID is to TRUTHFUL as CONTENTIOUS is to
- A. HARMONIOUS
 - B. QUARRELSOME
 - C. COHERENT
 - D. MENDACIOUS
 - E. UNPLEASANT
- 11.** COWARD is to COURAGE as
- A. CYNIC is to DOUBT
 - B. REVELER is to CHEER
 - C. MISER is to GENEROSITY
 - D. THINKER is to CONTEMPLATION
 - E. PARTNER is to COOPERATION
- 12.** IMPECUNIOUS is to WEALTH as
- A. ALACRITY is to SPEED
 - B. MYSTIQUE is to MYSTERY
 - C. ACERBITY is to BITTERNESS
 - D. IGNORANT is to UNDERSTANDING
 - E. POMPOUS is to SHOW
- 13.** BIASED is to IMPARTIALITY as
- A. APATHETIC is to EMOTION
 - B. STEADFASTNESS is to SOLIDITY
 - C. INCONGRUITY is to DISORGANIZATION
 - D. FORTUITOUS is to LUCK
 - E. HONEST is to INTEGRITY
- 14.** SHOVEL is to DIG as
- A. WASP is to STING
 - B. BROOM is to FLY
 - C. WOUND is to HEAL
 - D. DETERGENT is to CLEAN
 - E. CLIMB is to MOUNTAIN

15. POKER is to PROD as
- A. PEN is to WRITE
 - B. ATTRACT is to SMELL
 - C. STILTS is to CRAWL
 - D. CAUTION is to SUCCEED
 - E. ACTIVATE is to LEVER

Analogy Answers and Explanations

1. C. An example of a kind of tool is a **drill**, and an example of a kind of **poem** is a **sonnet**.
2. B. An intense form of **talk** is to **shout**, and in intense form of **dislike** is to **detest**.
3. D. The function of a **conductor** is to lead an **orchestra**, and the function of a **shepherd** is to lead a **flock**.
4. A. The opposite of **obstinate** is **compliant**, and the opposite of **oblivious** is **conscious**.
5. D. A location for a **bouquet** is a **vase**, and a location for **garbage** is a **sewer**.
6. B. An effect of **tension** is to cause **stress**, and an effect of a **virus** is to cause **disease**.
7. D. The function of a **barometer** is to measure **pressure**, and the function of **calipers** is to measure **thickness**.
8. A. The desire of a **miser** is **money**, and the desire of a **glutton** is **food**.
9. C. To lack **pride** is to be **humble**, and to lack **humor** is to be **somber**.
10. B. A synonym of **candid** is **truthful**, and a synonym of **contentious** is **quarrelsome**.
11. C. A **coward** suffers from a lack of **courage**, and a **miser** lacks **generosity**.
12. D. A person who is **impecunious** is poor, and therefore lacks **wealth**. A person who is **ignorant** lacks **understanding**.
13. A. A **biased** individual lacks **impartiality**, and an **apathetic** person lacks **emotion**.
14. D. **Detergent** is characteristically used to **clean**, and a **shovel** is characteristically used to **dig**.
15. A. A **poker** is used for **prodding**, and a **pen** is used for **writing**.

Reading Comprehension and Paragraph Comprehension

The Word Knowledge review in the following section will help you develop and test your understanding of vocabulary. This is important to help you express yourself clearly. However, reading comprehension is vital in understanding what you have read. It is important for you on several levels. First, you need to have the right skills to correctly answer these types of questions on the Officer Training School (OCS) exams. That's the primary purpose of this book—to help you score as high as possible when you apply for OCS.

Second, you need to have the ability to fully comprehend what you read for your career in the military. How can you function at the highest level, commanding others, if you don't understand regulations? How can you succeed if you don't understand written orders?

Third, it's important to understand what you read in your daily life, outside of the military. How do you learn about what's going on in the world? You read newspapers and magazines, but unless you are able to interpret what you read, you will be limited to the brief overviews you will garner from radio and/or television news reports.

This section reviews the basics of reading comprehension based on the various tests that are given in the military for those applying for OCS. Of course, not only do you want to do well on the exams, but you want to master reading comprehension for day-to-day functioning.

Answering Reading Comprehension Questions

You will find Reading Comprehension and/or Paragraph Comprehension questions on the AFOQT and the ASVAB exams. They are both similar in approach. You'll also find similar questions—Sentence Comprehension—on the ASTB exam. Although somewhat shorter in approach, these questions still test your reading comprehension.

You will be asked to demonstrate your ability to understand what you have read. Sometimes, you will be asked about the content of the passage, and the correct answer repeats words or phrases from the passage. Some questions have an answer that repeats the content of the passage in different words. For these questions, the correct answer is a paraphrase of material in the passage. Some questions ask you to make an inference. To *infer* is to make a conclusion based on the information in the passage, although the passage itself does not state this conclusion. There also may be questions about the meaning of words in the passage, but you are not expected to know the meaning of the word before reading the passage. You can determine the correct answer choice by seeing how the word is used.

Unless it is otherwise stated, the correct answer is based on something that is in the passage. Although you might know something additional about what appears in the passage, you should limit your answer choice to information presented in the passage. The questions do not expect you to bring in other material. Answer choices that are true statements may be provided, but if they are not in the passage, they are not the correct choice. You may even know that something in the passage is untrue. Even so, if that statement is given as an answer choice, it may be correct according to the passage.

As you read the passage to get a general idea of the subject, focus on the first and last sentence of each paragraph. These sentences often contain the most important idea in the paragraph, and one of them may state the paragraph's main idea. Look for words indicating how ideas are related. Words like *but* or *however* indicate contrasts. Often, words and phrases relating to causes and effects, such as *because*, *therefore*, and *as a result*, are material about which there will be questions.

Read each question and all four of the answer choices. Eliminate any choices that seem obviously incorrect. If one answer seems to be correct, reread the portion of the passage that it is about, and if this still seems to be the correct choice, select that answer. If none of the answers seem appropriate, reread the passage to see whether you can eliminate choices or find information to determine the correct answer.

If you still are uncertain about an answer, do not spend more time on that question. Because there is normally no deduction for wrong answers, choose the answer that seems most likely, even if you are unsure. You can return to these questions if you have time to do so.

Some people find it easier to skim over the questions before reading the passage. This gives them an idea of what to look for while they read. As you take the practice tests in this book, try this method to see whether it makes it easier for you to answer the questions.

The Directions

Following is a typical set of directions.

Directions: This is a test of your ability to understand what you read. In this section, you will find one or more paragraphs of reading material followed by incomplete statements or questions. You are to read the paragraph and select one of the four lettered choices that best completes the statement or answers the question. When you have selected your answer, fill in the correct numbered letter on your answer sheet.

From a building designer's standpoint, three things that make a home livable are the client, the building site, and the amount of money the client has to spend. According to this statement, to make a home livable

- A. the prospective piece of land makes little difference.
- B. it can be built on any piece of land.
- C. the design must fit the owner's income and site.
- D. the design must fit the owner's income.

The correct answer is C. The passage states both the building site and the amount of money the client has to spend are part of what makes a home livable.

Test-Taking Strategies

The ASVAB test requires that you answer 15 questions in a 13-minute period. You will be presented with a paragraph followed by a question with four choices from which to choose the correct answer. The AFOQT test presents 25 questions in 18 minutes, and you have five choices from which to select the best answer. On the ASTB exam, you'll also encounter Sentence Comprehension questions that are essentially reading comprehension. Each question on the ASTB exam provides four choices from which to choose.

You cannot spend a long time on any single question. If one of the answers immediately appears to you to be correct, quickly check the passage to see whether your answer is accurate and select that answer on the answer sheet. If you are not certain which answer is correct, first eliminate choices that you are sure are not correct. Then glance at the passage and decide which of the remaining possibilities is the best answer. If you find the question difficult to understand and do not have any idea about which answer is correct, go on to the next question. Return to the difficult questions after you have completed as many of the other questions as you can.

Be sure that your answers are based *only on the information that is given in the passage*. Sometimes, you may have more information about a subject than is given in a passage. You may find a statement in a passage that you do not think is correct. This section tests your reading ability, however, not your general knowledge about the subject of the passage. Do not choose an answer that you think is correct based on what you know about the subject of the passage. Only choose answers that are based on information in the passage.

Some test takers find it helpful to read the question before reading the passage. As you work on the practice questions in this chapter, try that method, as well as the method of reading the passage first and then the question. You should be able to decide which of these two methods makes it easier for you to determine the correct answer.

A sure way to do well on this section is to improve your general reading ability. Reading teachers agree that the best way to improve reading skills is to read as much as possible. The passages on this test use the kind of information you are likely to find in newspapers and magazines as well as in books. Practice reading all three kinds of material will be helpful when taking this test.

Kinds of Questions

You will encounter several different types of questions on most reading comprehension tests, regardless of whether you're answering a short passage or longer paragraphs. Following are samples and explanations of each type of question you will encounter on either of these different exams. These are followed by practice questions with the answers explained.

Identifying Stated Facts

These questions require that you read carefully for facts in a passage. Do not choose an answer that adds information not contained in the passage and be sure that your answer states all the information in the passage about the question. Look for an answer that uses exactly the same wording as a part of the passage.

A ballad is a type of poem that tells a story. It is written in groups of four lines. The lines rhyme in a set pattern. Often, ballads tell stories about death, or ghosts, or other supernatural beings. Sometimes, ballads tell love stories. To be a ballad, a poem must

- A. tell a story.
- B. contain a love story.
- C. be only four lines long.
- D. tell stories about death.

Explanation: The correct answer is **A**. It is stated in the first sentence of the passage. Choices **B** and **D** are only sometimes true of ballads. Choice **C** is not true according to the passage's second sentence.

Here is another practice question for you to try. Complete the last sentence.

The laws of the United States include rules and customs about the display of the U.S. flag. The flag should be displayed only from sunrise to sunset. It may be displayed at night if it is lighted so that it can be seen. It should be displayed at or near every place where voting is held on election days. It should never touch the ground or the floor. It should never be used for advertising purposes. The flag should never be displayed

- A. from sunrise to sunset.
- B. at night.
- C. above the ground or floor.
- D. for advertising purposes.

Explanation: The correct answer is **D**. It uses the same words that appear in the passage. You probably have seen advertisements that show the American flag. According to the passage, those advertisements violate rules about the display of the flag. Choices **A** and **C** are opposite statements from what the paragraph says. The second sentence says the flag *may* be displayed at night, so **B** is not a correct choice.

Identifying Reworded Facts

When you answer these questions, look for information in the answer that states the same facts that the passage states, even though the wording is different. The answer means the same thing as the statement in the passage, even though the words are not exactly the same.

In certain areas, water is so scarce that every attempt is made to conserve it. For instance, on an oasis in the Sahara Desert, the amount of water necessary for each date palm has been carefully determined. How much water is each tree given?

- A. No water at all
- B. Water on alternate days
- C. Exactly the amount required
- D. Water only if it is healthy

Explanation: The correct answer is **C**. The passage states "the amount of water necessary for each date palm has been carefully determined." "The amount required" means the same as "necessary."

Here is a practice question for you to try.

Liaison can refer to a person who communicates information between groups. The press secretary to the President of the United States is a *liaison* between the President and journalists. A manufacturing engineer is a *liaison* between a product's designers and the workers involved in making the product. The word *liaison* means someone who

- A. argues for a point of view.
- B. analyzes political issues.
- C. helps groups understand each other.
- D. designs products.

Explanation: The correct answer is **C**. To “communicate information between groups” is a way of helping them understand each other. **A** is not correct because it states the *liaison* only represents one point of view. Choices **B** and **D** are suggested by the examples in the paragraph, but they do not define *liaison*.

Determining Sequence of Events

The *sequence of events* means the order in which events occur. When a question asks about the order of events, look for key words that tell about time. These are words and phrases with which you are familiar such as soon, then, before, after, later, next, previously, lastly, to begin, in a little while, shortly, after an hour. These key words in the passage point to the answer to the question.

To check the engine oil on a car, lift the hood of the car. Be sure that it is propped open securely. Locate the dipstick, a rod that goes into the engine. Remove the dipstick to check the oil. Then see whether the oil comes up to the line marked on the dipstick. If it does, the engine is full. Next look at the condition of the oil. It should be light brown and clear, not dark or gritty looking. After replacing the dipstick, add or change oil if necessary. Finally, close the hood, and you're ready to drive. After removing the dipstick,

- A. see whether the engine is full.
- B. check the condition of the oil.
- C. replace the dipstick.
- D. close the hood.

Explanation: The correct answer is **A**. According to the passage, this is the first thing to do after removing the dipstick. Choices **B**, **C**, and **D** are introduced by “next,” “after” and “finally,” words showing these acts occur later in the order of events.

Antarctica is now a continent of ice and rocks. It was not always so. Millions of years ago, Antarctica, South America, Australia and New Zealand formed a supercontinent near the equator. Then, moving oceanic plates began to split the supercontinent apart. First, Antarctica, still attached to Australia, drifted south. Later, Antarctica separated from Australia and moved farther south until it rested over the South Pole. When did Antarctica come to rest over the South Pole?

- A. When it was part of a supercontinent.
- B. When it was attached to Australia.
- C. After it began to drift to the south.
- D. After it separated from Australia.

Explanation: The correct answer is **D**. According to the passage, choices **A**, **B**, and **C** list events that occurred before Antarctica came to rest over the South Pole.

Identifying Main Ideas

The main idea of a paragraph is a general statement that tells what the passage is about. It is a broad general statement. The other information in the paragraph is specific. It provides support for the main idea by explaining it or giving details and examples to illustrate or prove the main idea. An example of a general statement would be a sentence like “Green vegetables provide nutrients necessary for good health.” Specific details supporting this could be spinach contains iron, and broccoli has large quantities of B vitamins.

Sometimes, the main idea of the paragraph is stated. A stated main idea is called the paragraph’s topic sentence. This most often is the paragraph’s first sentence, but the main idea can also be stated at the end of the paragraph. It is unusual for the main idea to be stated in the middle of a paragraph, but sometimes a paragraph is written that way.

When a paragraph states a main idea, the correct answer to the question may present that idea in slightly different words. Sometimes, a writer chooses not to write a sentence stating the main idea. If so, the reader must decide what the main idea is by seeing what general statement could be made by adding up the specific information in the passage. When you do this, you are inferring the main idea.

In the 50 years between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of World War I, the United States changed from a rural nation to a power in the modern world. The country expanded to include all the territory between the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans. The population grew, partly as a result of immigration. The economy became increasingly industrial. Increased production of goods led to more trade with other nations. The main idea of this passage is that

- A. immigration increased the country’s population.
- B. international trade increased.
- C. the country became a powerful modern nation.
- D. the country’s territory expanded.

Explanation: The correct answer is **C**. It is a general statement. All of the other choices are specific details that demonstrate the growth of the country.

Toothpaste can be used to clean chrome faucets and make them shiny. A few tablespoons of white vinegar mixed with water in a spray bottle create an excellent cleaner for windows or mirrors. And, wet tea leaves will take the sting out of a burn. The main idea of this paragraph is

- A. some ordinary products have surprising uses.
- B. cleaning products don’t have to be expensive.
- C. vinegar and water mixed create a glass cleaner.
- D. tea is a refreshing beverage.

Explanation: The correct answer is **A**. It makes a general statement that the three sentences in the paragraph are examples of. Choice **B** describes an idea implied by the paragraph’s first two sentences, but it does not apply to the third sentence. Choices **C** and **D** are specific details, not general statements, and although **D** may be true, this idea is not stated in the paragraph.

Drawing Conclusions

These questions ask you to decide what you can conclude from information that is in the passage, although the passage does not directly state a conclusion. You can infer the conclusion from the information in the passage. The passage presents separate pieces of information, and drawing a conclusion requires that you see what these pieces of information imply. The passage does not tell you what the answer to the question is. Whatever is directly stated in the passage is not a conclusion. You determine the conclusion based on the logical relationships of information in the passage.

Twenty-five percent of all household burglaries can be attributed to unlocked windows or doors. Crime is the result of opportunity plus desire. To prevent crime, it is each individual's responsibility to

- A. provide the desire.
- B. provide the opportunity.
- C. prevent the desire.
- D. prevent the opportunity.

Explanation: The correct answer is **D**. The first sentence states 25 percent of burglaries result from leaving doors and windows unlocked. This is an *opportunity* for burglars. The second sentence tells you that crime is made up of not only opportunity but also the criminal's *desire* to commit a crime. Choice **B**, providing opportunity, is the opposite of preventing crime. Choices **A** and **B** are actions an individual cannot be responsible for in another person. The only logical conclusion, therefore, is that individuals can help to prevent crime by preventing the opportunity.

In a survey taken in July of residents of Metropolis, 44 percent approve of the mayor's job performance, 52 percent disapprove, and 4 percent have no opinion. In a similar survey one year ago, 51 percent approved, 39 percent disapproved, and 10 percent had no opinion. Based on this information, you can conclude

- A. the mayor's popularity increased.
- B. the mayor's popularity decreased.
- C. the mayor took an action the residents did not like.
- D. the mayor took an action the residents approved of.

Explanation: The correct answer is **C**. Choices **A** and **B** state in different words facts given in the passage about the change in the mayor's approval rating, but they are not conclusions. You logically can conclude there was a cause for the change. Since the approval rating declined, the cause would have to be an action the residents did not like.

Determining Purpose

Questions about purpose ask you to decide what the passage aims at or intends to do. A paragraph may be written to provide information or explanations. The reader thinks "Now I know something I didn't know before." The passage may give directions or instructions. The reader learns how to do something. The writer may want to persuade the reader to agree with what the passage says. A reader may agree or disagree with the main idea of the passage. This kind of writing is known as an argument.

In determining the purpose of a passage, consider how the sentences relate to each other. If the passage provides reasons for agreeing with a statement, it is probably an argument. If the sentences list a series of steps occurring in a process, the passage usually gives instructions. If the sentences present a series of facts, the passage's purpose is to inform or explain.

This medicine may be taken on an empty stomach or with food. Do not drive a car or operate heavy machinery after taking this medication, because it may make you sleepy. Take one pill each morning until all the pills have been taken. If you forget to take a pill, do not take two pills the following day. The purpose of this passage is to

- A. argue against taking two pills in one day.
- B. explain how the medicine may affect you.
- C. give instructions about how to take the medicine.
- D. inform the reader how the medicine will help cure symptoms.

Explanation: The correct answer is **C**. **A** is not correct because "do not take two pills" is not an idea with which you can agree or disagree. Although the passage says the medication may make you sleepy, the rest of the passage does not explain how the medicine will affect you, so **B** is not a correct choice. **D** is incorrect because nothing in the passage discusses how the medicine works.

As far as genes are concerned, those of chimpanzees and human beings are nearly 99 percent identical. The bonobo, a species related to chimpanzees, also has this genetic similarity. The genes of monkeys and orangutans are not as similar to human genes. Scientists are trying to find out which genes differ in humans and chimpanzees and how they are different. The author of this passage wants to

- A. inform readers about animal and human genes.
- B. explain why chimpanzee and human genes differ.
- C. argue for learning about genes.
- D. argue against experiments using animals.

The correct answer is **A**. **B** is incorrect because causes for the differences are not stated in the paragraph, so it does not explain why the genes differ. The passage does not give reasons for learning about genes. Therefore, **C** is incorrect. **D** is incorrect because the passage does not say anything about experiments on animals.

Identifying Technique

Authors can organize a brief passage or paragraph using different techniques. Questions about technique ask you to identify the basis of the passage's structure. Key words connecting sentences in the passage can help you to identify its technique.

If a passage tells a story of events in time order, using words or phrases like "first," "soon after" "then," "next," or "after a few minutes," its structure is based on narrative technique. Some paragraphs use description. What is known through the five senses makes up the passage's content. Descriptive paragraphs use the technique of organizing details spatially. Words and phrases like "on," "next to," "in front of," "over," "under" and "to the right [or left]."

Paragraphs that show how things are similar use comparison as a technique. Paragraphs that show how things are different use contrast as a technique. Some paragraphs use both comparison and contrast. Words and phrases like "similarly," "also," "likewise," and "in the same way" show comparison. "But," "yet," "however," and "on the other hand" indicate contrasts.

Paragraphs based on cause give information about why things, events, or ideas happen. Paragraphs based on effects give information about the results of events or ideas. Some paragraphs discuss both causes and effects. Words and phrases like "because," "for this reason," and "since" show organization based on cause. "As a result," "so," "therefore," "thus," and "consequently" indicate effects.

Today's professional golfers often hit the ball farther than golfers did in the past. One reason is that they spend time physically conditioning themselves. Therefore, they are strong. Golf clubs made of materials developed for modern technology are light, so they are easy to swing. Using computers, engineers design the surface of golf balls to make them travel great distances in the air. The organizing technique of this paragraph is best described as

- A. comparison and contrast.
- B. description.
- C. narration.
- D. cause and effect.

Explanation: The correct answer is **D**. Although the first sentence is a comparison, the rest of the paragraph gives reasons that the ball is hit farther and shows how these causes produce the effect of greater distance.

The Boston Tea Party was not the first protest against British taxes by the American colonists. A tax had been placed on sugar in 1764. Then, in 1765, the Stamp Act taxed legal documents and newspapers. These taxes were removed after the colonists stopped buying British goods. Two years later, the British put new taxes on lead, paper, glass, and tea. After further protests, all but the tax on tea were removed. Finally, in 1773, the colonists tossed boxes of tea overboard from ships in Boston Harbor to protest this tax. The organizing technique of this paragraph is

- A. description.
- B. contrast.
- C. narration.
- D. cause and effect.

Explanation: The correct answer is **C**. The first date mentioned is 1764, and the last is 1773, so time has passed. Time indicators like “then,” “after,” and “two years later” confirm that the passage’s technique is narration.

Determining Mood and Tone

The mood and tone of a passage consist of the emotions suggested by its content. To answer questions about mood and tone, think about the words in the passage. Are they associated with things that make people feel happy, like a bright sunny day or a special birthday party? Or, are they words related to events that usually make people sad, like illness or gloomy weather? Is the language strong and harsh, suggesting that the writer of the passage is angry? Are there exclamation points to indicate excitement? If the passage is a description, think about how you would feel if you were in the place that was described or were watching the events described. If a person is described, what facts about that person indicate how the person feels?

Through the open window, she saw that the tops of the trees were breaking out in little green buds that would soon be leaves. The rain had cleaned the air, and she felt a warm breeze signaling the end of winter. Patches of blue sky showed through the clouds, and she heard birds singing. The mood of this passage could best be described as

- A. fearful.
- B. hopeful.
- C. disgusted.
- D. comical.

Explanation: The correct answer is **B**. The clean air, the green buds, the blue sky, the warm air, and the singing birds are all descriptive details connected to springtime. Spring is the season when things that have stopped growing during the winter begin to grow again, so it is associated with life and hope. Although the passage is happy, it is not funny, so **D** would not be a good answer.

It was a dark and stormy night. The rain rattling on the roof sounded like skeletons dancing. Then I heard a strange sound outside the front door. What could it be? Who would go out in such a storm? I approached the door slowly, and opened it just a crack. I could see nothing. Cautiously, I opened the door another inch or two. But, still I saw nothing. A gust of wind—or something—I don’t know what —caught the door and opened it fully. With trembling hands, I slammed the door shut to keep out the wind. The tone of this passage is

- A. angry.
- B. frightened.
- C. thoughtful.
- D. unhappy.

Explanation: The correct answer is **B**. Storms often create a spooky mood. Words like “slowly” and “cautiously” as well as the description of the sound of the rain and being unable to see anything when the door is opened add to the tone of fright. The speaker’s trembling hands in the last sentence also indicate fear.

Reading Comprehension and Paragraph Comprehension Practice Questions

This sample test contains all of the different types of questions discussed in this chapter, but the questions are not in the same order as the preceding descriptions.

Directions: This is a test of your ability to understand what you have read. In this section, you will find one or more paragraphs of reading material followed by incomplete statements or questions. You are to read the paragraph and select one of four lettered choices that best completes the statement or answers the question. When you have selected your answer, fill in the correct numbered letter on your answer sheet.

1. In January 2002, a person buys a car that comes with a three year or 36,000 mile free replacement guarantee on the engine and transmission. In June 2005, the car has 34,300 miles on it. The transmission fails.

According to the situation described in the paragraph, the car dealer will

- A. put in a new transmission.
 - B. give the person a new car.
 - C. not fix the transmission at no cost.
 - D. not replace the car's engine.
2. A sonnet is a specific type of poem. It has 14 lines. The lines must rhyme in a set pattern. Sometimes, the last six lines of a sonnet contrast with the first eight lines. Many sonnets are love poems.

To be a sonnet, a poem must

- A. be a love poem.
 - B. present a contrast.
 - C. have fewer than 14 lines.
 - D. rhyme in a specific way.
3. When many people want to buy a product, the price will probably go up. In the summer, Americans travel more than they do at other times of year. They may take planes or trains, and many families drive to their vacation spots.

From the information in the paragraph, you can conclude that

- A. gasoline prices will rise in the summer.
- B. gasoline prices will rise in the winter.
- C. gasoline prices will go down in the summer.
- D. gasoline prices will not change in any season.

4. When you send a document to someone by electronic means, you are faxing it. The word "fax" comes from the word *facsimile*. Earlier ways of making facsimiles included photocopying and photographing. The oldest facsimiles were handwritten versions of original texts.

The word *facsimile* means

- A. an electronic copy.
 - B. an exact copy.
 - C. any document.
 - D. a photocopy.
5. The U.S. Supreme Court is the highest court in the nation. Its nine judges review cases from other courts. They decide whether these courts have ruled in a way that agrees with the U.S. Constitution. But, they cannot make new laws. Their decision is based on a majority vote of the nine judges.

The main idea of this paragraph is that

- A. The Supreme Court has nine judges.
 - B. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States.
 - C. The Supreme Court cannot make new laws.
 - D. The Supreme Court's decisions are based on a majority vote.
6. Most cars today have automatic transmissions. But, it is useful to know how to shift gears in a car with a standard transmission. Press the clutch pedal in with your left foot. Then use the shift lever to choose the proper gear. Release the clutch pedal while gently applying pressure to the gas pedal.

The last thing to do when shifting gears is to

- A. step on the gas.
- B. release the clutch.
- C. use the shift lever.
- D. press down on the clutch.

7. Recycling household waste is very important. Space for landfills where garbage is dumped is becoming scarce. Putting waste in the oceans causes pollution. Recycling is a way for cities to make money by selling recyclable items. And, recycling items helps to save natural resources.

The author's purpose in this passage is to

- A. explain what recycling is.
 - B. tell a story.
 - C. show a contrast.
 - D. argue for recycling.
8. Jackrabbits are not rabbits but members of the hare family. Hares are larger than rabbits, and they have longer ears. Newborn rabbits are naked and helpless, but infant hares are covered with fur and aware of their surroundings.

Hares and rabbits are contrasted by describing all of the following except

- A. their size.
 - B. length of ears.
 - C. what color they are.
 - D. newborn rabbits and hares.
9. Superman originated as a character in a comic book in the 1930s. Then a radio program called *The Adventures of Superman* was created. Later, Superman became part of going to the movies. Short episodes were shown each week in theaters in addition to a feature film. When television became part of American life, it, too, had a weekly program about Superman. In the 1980s several full-length films about Superman appeared.

From this passage, you can conclude

- A. Superman is a great hero.
- B. Superman has been popular for a long time.
- C. Superman has often appeared in films.
- D. Superman began in comic books.

10. People may think of pizza as a snack food. But, it is nutritious. The crust, made of a kind of bread, provides carbohydrates. The tomatoes contain Vitamin C and provide fiber. The cheese is a good source of calcium, which is needed for healthy bones.

Pizza is healthful because it

- A. includes a good source of calcium.
 - B. tastes good.
 - C. is a snack food.
 - D. can be ordered in a restaurant or bought frozen to bake at home.
11. The space shuttle is coming in for a landing. Over a loudspeaker, the waiting spectators hear "STS 42 is now over Brandenburg, making its turn for the coast." They quickly stand, look up, turn their eyes skyward. They hear the sonic boom and stare at the sky even more closely. There it is! First, it is only a speck. Then, the crowd applauds and cheers as they see it approaching earth.

The spectators who watch the shuttle land feel

- A. fear.
 - B. anger.
 - C. happiness.
 - D. excitement.
12. When people are in a group, they may not react to an emergency the same way they would if they were alone. One reason may be that each person thinks someone else has already done something. Or, seeing no one else speak, a person may feel nothing needs to be done. A third possibility is that the person does not want to draw attention to himself or herself.

This passage explains

- A. differences between individuals and people in groups.
- B. the effects of being part of a group.
- C. causes for behavior in a group.
- D. how people react to an emergency.

- 13.** In 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr., led a protest march in Birmingham, Alabama. Because he did not have a permit to hold the march, he was arrested. Then eight clergymen wrote a letter that was published in the local newspaper. The letter opposed protest marches as a way to end racial problems. While King was in jail, he wrote a reply to that letter. It has been reprinted many times since then under the title “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”

King wrote the letter

- A. before the protest march.
- B. when he was arrested.
- C. while he was thinking about racial problems.
- D. after he read the clergymen’s letter.

- 14.** King was arrested because

- A. the clergymen wrote a letter.
- B. he did not have a permit to hold the march.
- C. there were racial problems in Birmingham.
- D. he was put in jail.

- 15.** People sometimes say they will return back to a place they have visited. Since *return* means the same thing as *go back to*, the expressions *return back* is *redundant*.

The word *redundant* could be used to describe which one of the following phrases?

- A. cooperate together
- B. walk slowly
- C. review again
- D. add information

Reading Comprehension and Paragraph Comprehension Answers and Explanations

- 1.** C. Because the car is more than three years old, the free replacement guarantee will not apply. **A** is not correct because it does not tell whether the customer will have to pay for the work. No information in the paragraph suggests that **B** would be what would happen. Although **D** may be a true statement, the situation in the paragraph does not describe any problem with the engine.
- 2.** D. Choices **A** and **B** are statements that describe some but not all sonnets according to the paragraph. **C** is incorrect because the paragraph states that a sonnet has 14 lines.
- 3.** A. The paragraph states that Americans travel more in the summer. You can conclude that if they travel more, they will use more gasoline. And, the paragraph states that when people want to buy more of a product, the price goes up.
- 4.** B. Answers **A** and **D** are examples of facsimiles; they do not define the word. **C** is incorrect because the paragraph indicates that ways of making facsimiles are ways of making copies.
- 5.** A. A main idea is a general statement. The other choices are specific facts.
- 6.** A. The paragraph is written in the order of things to do, and this is the last action mentioned in the paragraph.
- 7.** D. The paragraph explains why recycling is a good idea. The paragraph is not a story (choice **B**) and does not have a contrast (choice **C**). It does not tell what recycling is, so **A** is incorrect.
- 8.** C. All of the other choices are discussed in the paragraph.
- 9.** B. The paragraph discusses Superman from the 1930s to the 1980s, so one can conclude that he has been popular for a long time. Choices **C** and **D** are facts stated in the paragraph. Most people would agree with choice **A**, but it is not part of the information in the paragraph.
- 10.** A. It is the only choice that states a fact about why pizza is a nutritious food.
- 11.** D. The details in the paragraph about standing up, staring at the sky, the exclamation “there it is,” and the applause and cheering show that the spectators are excited.
- 12.** C. Because the paragraph gives reasons, it is explaining causes. Although the first sentence of the paragraph is a contrast, the paragraph does not explain the contrast, so **A** is an incorrect choice.

13. **D.** Because King’s letter was a reply to the clergymen, he had to have written it after he read the letter.
14. **B.** This fact is stated in the second sentence of the paragraph.
15. **A.** From the paragraph, you can infer that a *redundant* expression is one in which both words have the same meaning. *Cooperate* means *work together*, so it is an example of a redundant expression. Choice **C** may look appropriate because *review* means look at again, but something can be reviewed more than one time.

Word Knowledge Review

Word Knowledge appears on the ASVAB, AFOQT, and the ASTB exams. The formats of the exams differ slightly, however. It’s important to understand that a strong vocabulary and sense of how to use words is important in any career field or in school. Applying for Officer Candidate School—regardless of the service branch—is an important step in your military career. You should be aware of the importance of words, their meanings, and their interpretations. Whether you are applying directly from school, or you already serve in the Armed Forces, the greater your abilities and knowledge in this area are, the better your chances for success—on the exams and in OCS.

The Word Knowledge section of the ASVAB presents questions in two different formats; both formats test your knowledge of synonyms, words that have the same or nearly the same meaning. In the first type of question, synonyms, the test presents an underlined word and then asks you to choose the word or phrase that has the same or nearly the same meaning. The second type of question, word-in-context presents a sentence. You must find the word or phrase that has a nearly identical meaning as the underlined word in the context of the sentence.

On the AFOQT exam, you are given a word and then asked to find the synonym from five choices (A–E). On the ASTB, two different types of questions test your vocabulary knowledge. The first type of question is a sentence with a missing word, and you are asked to choose the missing word from among four choices (A–D). The second type of question is a little more complex. You are given a brief quotation that contains a word that is used incorrectly. You are asked to select from a choice of five words, the word that would replace the incorrect word and would correctly convey the meaning of the quotation.

Kinds of Questions

Let’s look at the different question types you will encounter on the exams. There are two different forms of the question. The first type of questions is found on the ASVAB exam.

Rapid most nearly means

- A. slow.
- B. shameful.
- C. quick.
- D. gently.

C is the correct answer. The word **quick** means the same as the word **rapid**.

Following is the second question form.

He was asked to **cease** his activities.

- A. increase
- B. stop
- C. begin
- D. slow down

B is correct. The word **stop** is the same as the boldface word **cease**.

You can find the next type of question on the AFOQT.

CIRCUMVENT

- A. get over
- B. go under
- C. get through
- D. go around
- E. go easily

The correct answer is **D**, to get around. There's no trick to this type of question. It requires, however, a strong vocabulary (*circum* = *around*, *vent* = *go*). It's not much different than the ASVAB type question.

The next type of question is from the ASTB. This question format consists of a sentence in which one word is omitted. Select the choice that best completes the sentence.

Paul was able to ____ the complainer with a look of contempt.

- A. squelch
- B. offend
- C. assail
- D. expel

The correct answer is **A**. To squelch is to silence. This satisfies the meaning of the sentence.

The final type of question is also from the ASTB and is a little more complex. The following quotation contains a word that has been misused. It is not in keeping with the meaning of the quotation. You must first determine which word is incorrect, and then select, from the choices given, the word that would be more appropriate for that quotation.

“Even while their components vary from culture to culture, rites of adulteration convey status in a new social grouping on the participants.”

- A. maturity
- B. ceremony
- C. initiation
- D. consumption

The correct answer is **C**. The word **adulteration** is incorrect. It means to make something impure by adding a foreign substance. **Initiation**, which means the process of being admitted to something, fits the meaning of the sentence.

All of these questions really just require you to understand the vocabulary. This last type of question, however, requires a little more thought process on your part. You are required to first identify the word that is misused and then substitute the correct word.

Ways to Improve Your Vocabulary

The ability tested in the Word Knowledge portion of all three of these tests is your command of the language—in other words, your vocabulary. Of course, by this point in your life you might think that you have learned all of the words you will ever learn or that it will be impossible to improve your vocabulary. On the contrary! If you are diligent and put your mind to it, you can improve your vocabulary in several ways. Here are three that will definitely help:

- Read, read, read. Pick up a newspaper, a magazine, or a novel and make note of words you do not understand. Make a list or put them on note cards. First, try to figure out the meaning of the words by looking at the context in which they are used. Make an educated guess. If you are still not sure, look up the meaning of the words and write the words and their meaning out in a notebook or on note cards. Then try to make up your own sentences using the words.
- Learn a new word every day or every other day. You can get into the habit of looking up a new word in the dictionary every day. Write the word and its definition on a piece of paper. Then write a sentence using the word. This will help you visualize it. Don't pick words that are too technical or specialized (such as medical/scientific terms or proper names). Try using this new word in conversation.
- Words are made up, generally, of prefixes, roots, and suffixes. Many prefixes and roots have a Latin or Greek origin. If you can familiarize yourself with some of these, you will find that you can arrive at the meaning of some words by breaking them down. The following section will offer you some common prefixes, roots, and suffixes to help you tackle words you are unfamiliar with in the Word Knowledge section.

Prefixes

In order to break down words you do not understand or to help you recognize why a word means what it means, you should become familiar with prefixes. Prefixes are parts of words that come at the beginning of a word and that can affect its meaning.

As an example, look at the word *synonym*. This word is made up of the prefix *syn* plus the root *nym*. If you knew that the prefix *syn* means *with/together* or *same* and the root *nym* means *name* or *word*, then you could conclude that the word *synonym* means *same word*. And, that's what it means!

Look at another example. The word *circumvent* is made up of the prefix *circum* plus the root *vent*. If you knew that the prefix *circum* means *around* and the root *vent* means *go* or *come*, then you could conclude the word *circumvent* means *go around*.

What follows is a list of common prefixes that you often will find at the beginning of certain words. Following the prefix, you will find the meaning of the prefix and a word using the prefix (with a rough definition in parentheses following the word). Try including a word of your own in the space provided for each prefix. If you cannot come up with your own word, refer to a dictionary for help.

Prefix	Meaning	Word (Definition)	Your Example
ab-	away from	abnormal (away from normal)	
ad-	to, toward	adjoin (join to)	
a-, an-	not, without	apathy (without feeling)	
anti-	against	antiviolence (against violence)	
ambi-	both	ambidextrous (both hands)	
bene-	good	benign (good or harmless)	
circum-	around	circumvent (go around)	
con-	with, together	connect (come together)	
contra-	against	contradict (speak against)	
com-	with, together	communion (coming together)	
de-	down, away	descend (move down)	
dis-	apart, not	discontent (not content)	
e-	out of, from	eject (throw out)	

Prefix	Meaning	Word (Definition)	Your Example
ex-	out of, from	exclude (leave out)	
hyper-	over	hyperactive (overactive)	
hypo-	under	hypodermic (below the skin)	
inter-	between	interconnected (connected between)	
il-	not	illegal (not legal)	
in-	not	indiscreet (not discreet)	
in-	into	ingest (take into the body by mouth)	
im-	not	impossible (not possible)	
im-	into	imbibe (drink in)	
ir-	not	irrational (not rational)	
mal-	bad, evil	malign (speak badly of)	
ob-	against	obstruct (build against)	
omni-	all	omniscient (knows all)	
peri-	around	periscope (view around)	
post-	after	postgraduate (after graduation)	
pre-	before	precede (go before)	
pro-	for, forward	proceed (move forward)	
re-	again, back	reconvene (get together again)	
retro-	back	retrogression (step back)	
se-	away from	seduce (lead away)	
sub-	under	subhuman (below human)	
sur-, super-	over, above	supersonic (above sound)	
sym-, syn-	together, with	sympathy (feeling with or for)	
trans-	across	Transatlantic (across the Atlantic)	

Roots

Along with prefixes, roots are central to the meanings of words. If you familiarize yourself with some common roots, then you may be able to better recognize certain words or at least get a general feel for several words. By studying the following list of roots, you will be better equipped to break down many words and make sense of them.

Following you will find a root, its meaning, a word using the root and a space in which you can write another word that uses the same root.

Root	Meaning	Word (Definition)	Your Example
ami, amic	love	amicable	
anthrop	human, man	anthropology	
arch	chief or leader	patriarch	

Part I: Subject Area Review

Root	Meaning	Word (Definition)	Your Example
auto	self	autobiography	
aud	sound	audible	
brev	short	brief	
bio	life	biography	
cap	take, seize	capture	
ced	yield, go	intercede	
corp	body	corporal	
cred	believe	credible	
culp	guilt	culpable	
chron	time	synchronize	
crac, crat	rule, ruler	democracy	
dic	speak, say	dictate	
duc, duct	lead	deduce	
demo	people	democracy	
equ	equal	equity	
grad, gress	step	progression	
graph	writing, printing	biography	
ject	throw	inject	
luc	light	elucidate	
log	study of	geology	
mono	one	monotone	
man	hand	manual	
min	small	minority	
mit, miss	send	emit	
mort	death	mortal	
mut	change	mutate	
nym	word or name	pseudonym	
nov	new	renovate	
pac	peace	pacify	
pel, puls	push	compel	
pot	power	potent	
port	carry	portable	
path	feeling	apathy	

Root	Meaning	Word (Definition)	Your Example
phil	like, lover of	philosophy	
quer, quis	ask	query	
scrib	write	manuscript	
sed	sit	sedentary	
sent	feel	sensory	
sequ	follow	sequel	
son	sound	unison	
spir	breathe	inspire	
tang, tact	touch	tangible	
vac	empty	vacant	
ven	come, go	intervene	
ver	truth	verify	
vert	turn	introvert	
vit	life	revitalize	
voc	call	evocative	

Suffixes

Suffixes come at the end of words and usually change the part of speech (noun, adjective, adverb, and so on) of words, which also subtly changes the meaning. Becoming familiar with suffixes may help you get a sense of the meaning the word is *conveying*, even if you are not sure of what the definition of the word is exactly.

Look at a word with different suffixes to see how the part of speech or the meaning can change. For example, the word *sedate* means to calm or relax. The following sentences contain words that are made up of the root word *sedate* but have different suffixes attached:

- The doctor prescribed a *sedative* [something that sedates] to calm her nerves.
- The speech was delivered *sedately* [in a sedate manner].
- The dog was under *sedation* [in a state of sedation] for the long trip.
- Many office workers live a *sedentary* [relating to nonactive] lifestyle.

As you can see, in each of the sentences, the word *sedate* means generally the same thing, but the part of speech changes. However, you can get a sense of *how* the word changes if you know what the suffixes mean.

What follows is a list of common suffixes that you may encounter at the ends of certain words. Try applying these suffixes at the ends of words you know (or words from the preceding lists) to see how the part of speech or the meaning of the word changes.

Suffix	Meaning	Your Example
-able, ible	capable of or susceptible to	
-ary	of or relating to	
-ate	to make	

Suffix	Meaning	Your Example
-ian	one relating to or belonging to	
-ic	relating to or characterized by	
-ile	relating to or capable of	
-ion	action or condition of	
-ious	having the quality of	
-ism	quality, process, or practice of	
-ist	one who performs	
-ity	state of being	
-ive	performing or tending to	
-ize, ise	to cause to be or become	
-ly	resembling or in the manner of	
-less	without	
-ment	action or process or the result	
-ology	study of	
-y, -ry	state of	

Strategies for Scoring Well

With the prefixes, roots, and suffixes you have studied at this point, you should be ready to answer the following practice questions. These practice questions consist of 40 questions in the three formats that you will encounter on the AFOQT and the ASTB exams. Regardless of which test you plan to take, it would be extremely helpful to answer all three types of questions. They all test your knowledge of vocabulary, and your ability to select the correct word. Upon completion of the practice questions, you should check your answers with the answer key that follows and look at the explanations.

Word Knowledge Practice Questions

Directions: The AFOQT Word Knowledge test has 25 questions and will test your ability to understand written language. For each question, choose the answer that means the same as the capitalized word.

Although this is not an actual test, it would be helpful if you were to answer these questions under simulated conditions.

1. GRAPHIC

- A. unclear
- B. detailed
- C. large
- D. childish

2. INDISPENSABLE

- A. trashy
- B. ridiculous
- C. necessary
- D. uninvited

3. CONCOCT

- A. make up
- B. throw away
- C. go through
- D. walk around

4. SONIC

- A. relating to the sun
- B. relating to the moon
- C. relating to sound
- D. relating to the earth

5. ASSIMILATE

- A. to take in
- B. to make fun of
- C. to rob of
- D. to ignore

6. DEGRADATION

- A. happiness
- B. anger
- C. celebration
- D. poverty

7. CONTRADICT

- A. to talk about
- B. to see the future
- C. to fall down
- D. to speak against

8. SEQUENTIALLY

- A. sensibly
- B. randomly
- C. in order
- D. out of order

9. CULPRIT

- A. a shy person
- B. a shallow waterway
- C. the guilty party
- D. the most qualified person

10. OMNIPOTENT

- A. all-knowing
- B. all-seeing
- C. all-hearing
- D. all-powerful

11. SUBMISSIVE

- A. meek
- B. not intelligent
- C. kind
- D. strong

12. DEMEANING

- A. boring
- B. humiliating
- C. colorful
- D. ignorant

13. FLUCTUATE

- A. remain the same
- B. follow a downward course
- C. follow an upward course
- D. change

14. RENOVATE

- A. destroy
- B. restore
- C. return
- D. go around

15. INTERCEDE

- A. to bring something to an end
- B. to act as a judge
- C. to act as mediator
- D. to laugh at something

Directions: The following questions from the ASTB consist of sentences in which one word is omitted. For each question, select the lettered choice that best completes the thought expressed in the sentence.

16. The committee voted to ____ the membership requirements, but the board of directors overruled the vote, and the requirements remained in place.
- A. consider
 - B. remember
 - C. rescind
 - D. enhance
17. He tried to budget his funds, but his ____ for gambling led him into debt.
- A. talent
 - B. predilection
 - C. consideration
 - D. distaste
18. After the cake collapsed in the oven, the cook decided the recipe needed to be ____.
- A. increased
 - B. fermented
 - C. consolidated
 - D. amended
19. Pouring water on burning grease will not put out the fire; instead it will ____ the danger.
- A. quench
 - B. improve
 - C. exacerbate
 - D. expiate
20. The casserole of potatoes, made without salt, pepper, or spices, tasted ____.
- A. savory
 - B. complex
 - C. necrotic
 - D. insipid
21. Loudly and repeatedly, the suspect ____ protested, "I didn't do it."
- A. vehemently
 - B. contentedly
 - C. simply
 - D. graciously
22. Advertisements use hidden persuasion; ____ and manipulation create a demand for products.
- A. guile
 - B. simplicity
 - C. candor
 - D. mischief
23. Because the plot was familiar and the dialogue commonplace, the critics called the film ____.
- A. exciting
 - B. creative
 - C. banal
 - D. awkward
24. The game was tied, the potential winning run was at bat, and the fans became ____, jumping up from their seats, stamping their feet, and cheering.
- A. angry
 - B. frenetic
 - C. disillusioned
 - D. outspoken
25. The defendant sat ____ in the witness chair, neither moving nor showing any facial expressions.
- A. stupidly
 - B. softly
 - C. solidly
 - D. stolidly
26. Country music songs often describe people at the ____ of their lives; their dogs run away, their spouses leave them, and their pickup trucks break down.
- A. pyramid
 - B. sample
 - C. nadir
 - D. confluence
27. Having a ____ of acting talent, she was not selected for the leading role in the play.
- A. modicum
 - B. plenitude
 - C. quality
 - D. similarity

- 28.** So many factors were involved in the decision that he could find no way out of the ____.
- A. mine
 - B. solution
 - C. quandary
 - D. question
- 29.** The attorney tried to be ____ in drawing up the contract; nevertheless, some of its terms were unclear.
- A. hyperactive
 - B. conscientious
 - C. punctilious
 - D. legitimate
- 30.** Slavery is the ____ of destroying human dignity.
- A. negation
 - B. epitome
 - C. institution
 - D. practice

Directions: The following questions from the ASTB consist of quotations that contain one word that is incorrectly used because it is not in keeping with the meaning that each quotation is evidently intended to convey. Determine which word is incorrectly used. Then select from the lettered choices the word that, when substituted for the incorrectly used word, would best help to convey the intended meaning of the quotation.

- 31.** “When a reader tells me my novel makes a political statement, I am distressed, because such a remark complies literature with propaganda.”
- A. corrupts
 - B. communicates
 - C. concocts
 - D. confounds
- 32.** “His baseball-oriented parents, his work ethic, and his reluctant competitive nature made it possible for Cal Ripken, Jr., the best shortstop of his era, to break the record for consecutive games played.”
- A. relentless
 - B. persuasive
 - C. moderate
 - D. contest
- 33.** “Applicants for insurance disclose personal information to our company; state and federal laws regulate the uses of this information for any purpose; and, therefore, we instruct our employees to understand the importance of restraining the confidentiality of personal information supplied by you to our company.”
- A. permitting
 - B. maintaining
 - C. complicating
 - D. forwarding
- 34.** “Arguments, in the academic sense of the term, provide a device for exploring a controversy or dispute, a tool for isolating issues in contention, and a way to evaluate different possible outcomes; furthermore, they shape and mangle each arguer’s position.
- A. manipulate
 - B. clarify
 - C. reply
 - D. obscure
- 35.** “In ancient cultures, natural phenomena such as thunder and lightning storms and eclipses of the sun or the moon were believed to be omens that some great event or disaster was studied.”
- A. motivated
 - B. famous
 - C. imminent
 - D. reclusive

- 36.** “United States Supreme Court decisions are presented in a written document known as an opinion, which includes the Court’s ruling and the reasoning of the majority of the justices; any justice in the minority may write a rebuking opinion.”
- A. consoling
 - B. dissenting
 - C. condemned
 - D. motive
- 37.** “E-mail allows communication to be processed at a time convenient to the calculator rather than requiring immediate attention, which may interrupt other work priorities.”
- A. vendor
 - B. administrator
 - C. messenger
 - D. recipient
- 38.** “A useless plan for improving elementary education must take into consideration not only the standards pupils should meet, but also the resources available to schools.”
- A. revolting
 - B. willful
 - C. viable
 - D. noble
- 39.** “While Supreme Court decisions have rejected the view that all conduct engaged in to express an idea can be labeled speech, it has held that some conduct may be sufficiently persuaded by the element of communication to fall under the First Amendment’s protection of speech.”
- A. criticized
 - B. distanced
 - C. negated
 - D. pervaded
- 40.** “To study mistakes and errors in logic can be instructive, because the recognition and correction of these errors helps one to understand the principles of reasoning on which such exacerbating activities depend.”
- A. remedial
 - B. determinate
 - C. notice
 - D. philosophical

Word Knowledge Answers and Explanations

Use the following answer key to check your answers. You will find a brief explanation of each answer.

1. **B.** Graphic (graph = written or drawn) means described in vivid detail or clearly drawn out, so detailed would most closely mean graphic.
2. **C.** Indispensable literally means not dispensable (able to be thrown away). So, if something is indispensable, it is necessary; you cannot do away with it.
3. **A.** Concoct means to create or come up with, like in the sentence “The two boys concocted a plan to skip school.” Concoct most closely means to make up.
4. **C.** Sonic means relating to sound (son = sound).
5. **A.** Assimilate means to absorb or take in. If a group of individuals successfully assimilates, then they have converged and incorporated into one group.
6. **D.** Degradation is a state of poverty or squalor. It literally means “a step down” (de = down, grad = step).
7. **D.** Contradict literally means to speak against (contra = against, dict = speak).
8. **C.** Sequentially means items are arranged in order or in a sequence (sequ = follow).
9. **C.** The culprit is the person who is guilty (culp = guilt).
10. **D.** Omnipotent literally means all-powerful (omni = all, pot = power).
11. **A.** A submissive (sub = under, miss = send) person is one who is meek and passive, not aggressive.

12. B. Demeaning (de = down) means something that puts one down or is humiliating.
13. D. Fluctuate (fluc = change) means to change, go up and down, not constant.
14. B. Renovate means to restore or to make new again (re = again, nov = new).
15. C. Intercede means to go between (inter = within, ced = go) or to mediate.
16. C. The word **rescind** means to repeal; to revoke.
17. B. The word **predilection** means inclination toward; preference for.
18. D. The word **amended** means changed.
19. C. The word **exacerbate** means to make worse; to increase the severity.
20. D. The word **insipid** means dull; lacking excitement or flavor.
21. A. The word **vehemently** means with great force.
22. A. The word **guile** means trickery; deceit; cunning.
23. C. The word **banal** means predictable; trite.
24. B. The word **frenetic** means wildly excited.
25. D. The word **stolidly** means showing little or no emotion; impassive.
26. C. The word **nadir** means the lowest point.
27. A. The word **modicum** means a small amount.
28. C. The word **quandary** means dilemma; perplexity.
29. D. The word **punctilious** means extremely careful; precisely observing rules.
30. B. The word **epitome** means perfect example; embodiment.
31. D. The word **complies** is incorrect. The writer is distressed, so the quotation intends to convey the idea that literature should not be thought of as propaganda. **Confounds**, which means fails to distinguish between, best expresses the sentence's meaning.
32. A. The word **reluctant** is not correct. A reluctant person is unwilling to do something. **Relentless**, which means steady and persistent, describes the kind of person who could break a record.
33. B. The word **restraining** is incorrect because to restrain means to put limits on. The quotation is intended to reassure people that information will be kept confidential. Therefore, **maintaining** is the word that would convey the intended meaning.
34. A. The word **mangle**, meaning to ruin, is incorrect. The quotation is about the advantages of argument. Replacing **mangle** with **clarify** expresses that idea.
35. C. The word **studied** is incorrect. The idea of the sentence is that these phenomena were about to occur, which is what the word **imminent** means.
36. B. The word **rebuking**, which means scolding, is incorrect. A justice in the minority disagrees with the majority. The word **dissenting** means disagreeing.
37. D. The word **calculator** is incorrect. The meaning of the sentence is that the person who receives the e-mail, the **recipient**, will not have to interrupt other tasks.
38. C. The word **useless** is incorrect. The sentence intends to convey what the requirements for a good plan would be. The word **viable**, meaning capable of success or effective, best conveys that meaning.
39. D. The word **persuaded** is incorrect. The sentence's intended meaning is that some conduct deserves the same protection as speech. This is conduct that is **pervaded** by elements of communication. Pervaded means to be present throughout.
40. A. The word **exacerbating**, meaning to make worse, is incorrect. **Remedial**, which means to correct or to find a remedy for, describes the recognition and correction of errors.

