

Words in Context

Medium Questions

Question 1

Building on research on plants like *Nicotiana attenuata* by Ian T. Baldwin (1997), studies show that when attacked by herbivores, plants release volatile organic compounds. These airborne chemicals are perceived by neighboring plants, thereby _____ information about the presence of a threat, enabling them to initiate defensive measures proactively.

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

- A inhibiting
- B disrupting
- C absorbing
- D conveying

Question 2

During hibernation, ground squirrels exhibit profound physiological changes. Their body temperature drops drastically, heart rate slows, and metabolic activity is suppressed to conserve energy. This allows them to survive periods of harsh environmental conditions and food scarcity. Research by Thomas Ruf and colleagues (2002) highlights that these animals enter a state of controlled hypothermia and hypometabolism, where their vital processes are significantly reduced, enabling prolonged periods of _____.

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

- A alertness
- B reproduction
- C foraging
- D inactivity

Question 3

The Volga River delta system is located in Russia, where the river drains into the Caspian Sea, and is shaped by _____ factors: for example, the geography of the coastline influences sedimentary deposition, which over time alters coastal geography.

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

- A interdependent
- B tenuous
- C unyielding
- D comprehensive

Question 4

Gérard Genette, a prominent figure in narratology, introduced the concept of narrative frequency in his seminal work, *Narrative Discourse* (1972). He identified different ways a story's events can be recounted, including the singulative, where an event that happened once is narrated once, and the *iterative*, where a single narrative utterance describes multiple instances of an event. This approach allows for a synthesis of events that occurred _____.

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

- A sporadically
- B vividly
- C uniquely
- D recurrently

Question 5

Jackson Pollock's "drip paintings," such as *Number 1, 1950* (Lavender Mist), appear at first glance to be purely chaotic and spontaneous applications of paint. However, close examination and analysis of his technique reveal a surprising degree of intentionality. Pollock himself stated that he could control the flow of paint and that there were "no accidents" in his work. This suggests that while the process was dynamic, the final result was far from a random _____.

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

- A outcome
- B occurrence
- C happenstance
- D creation

Question 6

Some pieces of music might have many meanings—the compositions of Albertine Caron-Legrís can _____ as many different interpretations as there are people to listen to them—and so as long as a listener's interpretation isn't willfully absurd or the result of inattention, it is difficult to justify the claim that the listener has misunderstood the piece.

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

- A yield
- B refute
- C counteract
- D partition

Question 7

Seed dormancy, a state where viable seeds fail to germinate even under favorable conditions, is a critical adaptive trait in many plants. This period of arrested development, described by J.D. Bewley in his 1997 work on seed physiology, allows seeds to survive until environmental cues signal optimal germination timing. During this time, metabolic activity within the seed is significantly reduced, maintaining the seed in a _____ condition.

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

- A quiescent
- B proliferative
- C dynamic
- D resilient

Question 8

In their seminal 1974 paper, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky explored cognitive biases, particularly the anchoring effect. This phenomenon describes how individuals tend to rely heavily on the initial piece of information they receive (the "anchor") when making subsequent judgments, even if that initial information is irrelevant. This reliance often leads to adjustments that are _____ toward the initial anchor, resulting in estimations that deviate from objective values.

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

- A insufficient
- B conclusive
- C impartial
- D unpredictable

Question 9

Solomon Asch's 1950s conformity experiments, where participants judged line lengths in groups with confederates giving incorrect answers, famously demonstrated how individuals often yield to group pressure. Even when the correct answer was visually unambiguous, a significant percentage of participants conformed to the majority's erroneous response. This phenomenon illustrates the powerful effect of social influence on individual behavior, even overriding clear sensory evidence and personal conviction. It highlighted that people will sometimes ignore reality to _____.

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

- A analyze data
- B express dissent
- C maintain independence
- D align with the group

Question 10

In their seminal 1974 paper, psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky explored cognitive biases that affect judgment. One such bias, the anchoring effect, demonstrates that individuals tend to rely heavily on the initial piece of information offered—the "anchor"—when making decisions. Subsequent judgments are then made by adjusting away from this anchor, but these adjustments are often _____.

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

- A erratic
- B comprehensive
- C insufficient
- D radical

Question 11

A school of literary criticism prominent in the mid-20th century, New Criticism—as articulated by theorists like W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley in their 1946 essay *The Intentional Fallacy*—maintained that a text's meaning is solely derived from its internal structure and linguistic features. This perspective thus argued that a work's interpretation should be _____ to the text itself, rather than reliant on external biographical or historical information.

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

- A universal
- B exhaustive
- C prescriptive
- D intrinsic

Question 12

In economics, traditional models often assume a *rational agent*—an idealized decision-maker who possesses perfect information and consistently makes choices to maximize their utility. However, the field of behavioral economics, notably influenced by researchers such as Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, highlights that actual human behavior frequently _____ from these theoretical predictions, exhibiting cognitive biases and heuristics that lead to suboptimal outcomes in real-world scenarios.

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

- A deviates
- B coalesces
- C persists
- D stabilizes

Question 13

Igneous rocks are broadly classified by their texture and composition. Texture refers to the size and arrangement of mineral grains within the rock, which is largely controlled by the cooling rate of the magma. Rocks with a phaneritic texture, such as granite and gabbro, contain large, visible crystals. This indicates a relatively slow cooling history, typically occurring deep within the Earth's crust. Conversely, aphanitic rocks, like basalt, have microscopic crystals, signifying rapid cooling near the surface. The cooling rate is thus a key _____ the resulting crystalline structure.

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

- A consequence of
- B byproduct of
- C exception to
- D determinant of

Question 14

According to sociologist Erving Goffman's 1959 work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, individuals strategically manage their self-presentation in social interactions. This "front stage" behavior involves curating specific impressions for an audience, often leading to the *concealment* of genuine intentions or private thoughts. Therefore, an individual's true disposition frequently remains _____.

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

- A veiled
- B accessible
- C distorted
- D dynamic

Question 15

Deep-sea environments, characterized by extreme pressure and frigid temperatures, present significant physiological challenges for marine organisms. Researchers such as Jeffrey Drazen and Bruce Robison (2004) have extensively studied how deep-sea fish adapt, finding that many species exhibit metabolic rates that are surprisingly _____. This crucial physiological adjustment allows them to conserve energy efficiently in an ecosystem with severely limited food resources and remarkably slow growth.

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

- A accelerated
- B erratic
- C robust
- D attenuated

Question 16

In reader-response criticism, Stanley Fish's concept of "interpretive communities" argues that meaning is not inherent in the text itself but is instead actively constructed by the reader. These communities, sharing similar strategies and assumptions, significantly _____ individual interpretations, shaping how readers understand a literary work. This perspective highlights the subjective nature of reading.

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

- A influence
- B complicate
- C diverge
- D stabilize

Question 17

The giant tube worm, *Riftia pachyptila*, discovered at hydrothermal vents, lacks a mouth and digestive tract. As biologist Colleen Cavanaugh elucidated in her 1983 work, these worms instead harbor endosymbiotic bacteria, which oxidize hydrogen sulfide to produce organic carbon. This specialized metabolic pathway allows *R. pachyptila* to _____ in an ecosystem entirely independent of solar energy.

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

- A regress
- B diverge
- C stagnate
- D subsist

Question 18

According to Leon Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance, when individuals hold conflicting beliefs or encounter information inconsistent with their attitudes, they experience mental discomfort. To alleviate this dissonance, they often modify their attitudes or perceptions to achieve internal consistency, frequently rationalizing their choices to present them as internally _____.

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

- A congruent
- B discordant
- C arbitrary
- D erroneous

Question 19

The mutualistic symbiosis between corals and *Symbiodiniaceae* algae is fundamental to tropical reef health. Yet, this partnership is acutely sensitive to environmental variables. Studies by Rowan (1998) and Baker (2004) underscore that sustaining this highly specific association in changing oceans imposes _____ requirements on both partners.

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

- A variable
- B exacting
- C flexible
- D simple

Question 20

Although fewer companies trade their stocks on the Cambodia Securities Exchange in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, than on the stock exchanges in London, Mumbai, or Tokyo, the Cambodia Securities Exchange has the advantage of being able to _____ relatively small companies in Cambodia: by connecting those companies to investors with expertise about the country's economic conditions, the Cambodia Securities Exchange can help those companies thrive.

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

- A designate
- B nurture
- C preclude
- D assess

Answers

Question 1

Correct Answer: D

The passage states that plants release airborne chemicals that are "perceived by neighboring plants" and provide "information about the presence of a threat." This means the chemicals are sending or communicating the information from one plant to another. The word that best fits this meaning is "conveying," which means to communicate or transmit. (A) "Inhibiting" means blocking or hindering. (B) "Disrupting" means interfering with something. (C) "Absorbing" means taking something in. None of these words accurately describe the action of sending information about a threat. Therefore, (D) is the correct answer.

Question 2

Correct Answer: D

The passage describes how ground squirrels in hibernation have drastically reduced body temperature, slowed heart rate, and suppressed metabolic activity to conserve energy and survive harsh conditions. These are all indicators of a state where the animal is not active. The blank requires a word that describes this state of reduced activity. Looking at the choices, (A) alertness is the opposite of the state described. (B) reproduction and (C) foraging are specific activities that the animal would not be engaged in during this energy-conserving state. (D) inactivity accurately describes the state where vital processes are significantly reduced and the animal is conserving energy.

Question 3

Correct Answer: A

The colon in the sentence signals that the following clause will explain the blank. The phrase "the geography of the coastline influences sedimentary deposition, which over time alters coastal geography" indicates a reciprocal relationship where factors influence each other. This suggests that the factors are linked and mutually dependent. Therefore, (A) interdependent is the most logical and precise word.

(B) Tenuous means weak or slight, which does not fit the described relationship.

(C) Unyielding means inflexible or rigid, contradicting the idea of mutual influence.

(D) Comprehensive means complete or extensive, which doesn't describe the interactive nature of the factors.

Question 4

Correct Answer: D

The passage discusses Gérard Genette's concept of "iterative" narrative, which is defined as a single narrative mentioning "multiple instances of an event" or a "synthesis of events that occurred _____". This means that an iterative narrative describes something that happened repeatedly. Therefore, the word that fills the blank must mean "repeatedly". Looking at the options, (A) sporadically means occasionally or at irregular intervals, (B) vividly means in a clear or detailed manner, (C) uniquely means in a way that is the only one of its kind, and (D) recurrently means happening often or repeatedly. The word "recurrently" best fits the definition of an iterative narrative provided in the passage.

Question 5

Correct Answer: A

The passage discusses how Jackson Pollock's drip paintings, despite their seemingly chaotic appearance, were not random but rather the result of intentional control. The blank is contrasted with "random," indicating that the final result was something deliberate and planned. An "outcome" is a result or consequence of a process, which aligns with the idea of an intentional conclusion to Pollock's painting method. (B) "Occurrence" is too general, referring to anything that happens. (C) "Happenstance" implies chance, which is directly contradicted by the passage. (D) "Creation" is too broad; while the painting is a creation, the blank needs to specifically refer to the result of the controlled process.

Question 6

Correct Answer: A

The sentence states that Caron-Legris's compositions "can ____ as many different interpretations as there are people to listen to them." The phrase "as many different interpretations as there are people" indicates that the music produces or allows for numerous interpretations. The word "yield" means to produce or provide, which perfectly fits this context, suggesting the music produces many interpretations.

B. refute means to prove wrong, which does not fit the context of producing interpretations.

C. counteract means to act against something, which is contrary to the idea of allowing many interpretations.

D. partition means to divide into parts, which does not make sense in the context of interpretations.

Question 7

Correct Answer: A

The passage describes seed dormancy as a period of "arrested development" where the seed's "metabolic activity is significantly reduced." This indicates a state of inactivity or rest. Looking at the choices, (A) quiescent means being at rest, inactive, or still, which aligns with the description. (B) proliferative means increasing rapidly in number, which contradicts the idea of arrested development. (C) dynamic means characterized by continuous change or activity, the opposite of reduced metabolic activity. (D) resilient means able to recover quickly from difficulties, which doesn't describe a state of reduced metabolic activity. Therefore, "quiescent" is the most logical and precise word to complete the text.

Question 8

Correct Answer: A

The passage states that the reliance on the initial anchor leads to "adjustments that are _____ toward the initial anchor". This means the adjustments made after the initial anchor are not enough to move the final judgment significantly away from the anchor. Therefore, the adjustments are described as inadequate or not enough. Looking at the choices, (A) insufficient means not enough, which matches the context. (B) conclusive means settling an issue, which doesn't fit. (C) impartial means unbiased, which is the opposite of being skewed toward the anchor. (D) unpredictable means not able to be predicted, which isn't supported by the description of the bias. Thus, insufficient is the most logical and precise word.

Question 9

Correct Answer: D

The passage states that participants conformed to the majority's incorrect answer even when the correct answer was unambiguous and overrode clear sensory evidence and personal conviction. This indicates that people were changing their behavior to match the group. Step 2 is to find an answer choice that matches this meaning. (A) is incorrect because analyzing data is not supported by the text. (B) is incorrect because expressing dissent is the opposite of conforming. (C) is incorrect because maintaining independence is also the opposite of conforming. (D) means to adjust one's behavior to match a group, which aligns with the passage's description of participants conforming to the majority's view despite knowing it was wrong.

Question 10

Correct Answer: C

The passage states that individuals adjust away from the initial anchor but that these adjustments lead to "faulty decision-making" and that people "fail to correctly adjust their initial impressions". This indicates that the adjustments are not enough to reach the correct conclusion. Therefore, the adjustments are insufficient.

(A) Erratic means unpredictable or inconsistent. The passage does not suggest the adjustments are inconsistent, but rather that they are consistently inadequate.

(B) Comprehensive means complete or thorough. The passage implies the adjustments are incomplete, leading to errors.

(D) Radical means extreme or drastic. The passage states the adjustments are not significant, which is the opposite of radical.

Question 11

Correct Answer: D

The passage states that New Criticism believes a text's meaning is "solely derived from its internal structure and linguistic features" and should not be

"reliant on external biographical or historical information." This means the interpretation should come from within the text itself. The word that best fits this meaning is "intrinsic," which means belonging naturally or essentially to something.

(A) "Universal" means applicable to all cases, which is not the focus here.

(B) "Exhaustive" means complete and thorough, which describes the depth of interpretation, not its source.

(C) "Prescriptive" means laying down rules or instructions, which might describe the New Critical *approach* but not the *nature* of the meaning relative to the text itself.

Question 12

Correct Answer: A

The passage contrasts the idealized behavior of a rational agent with actual human behavior. It states that actual human behavior exhibits cognitive biases and heuristics that lead to suboptimal outcomes, which is different from the predictions of traditional economic models. Therefore, the word that fills the blank must mean "differs" or "is inconsistent with". (A) deviates means differs or strays from, which matches this meaning. (B) coalesces means comes together, which is the opposite of the intended meaning. (C) persists means continues unchanged, which is incorrect because the behavior is described as different. (D) stabilizes means becomes steady or unchanging, which does not fit the context of contrasting actual behavior with a theoretical model.

Question 13

Correct Answer: D

The passage states that the cooling rate controls the size and arrangement of mineral grains, and that it is a key _____ the resulting crystalline structure. This means the cooling rate directly influences or decides what

the crystalline structure will be. Looking at the choices, "determinant of" means something that determines or decides something else. This matches the idea that the cooling rate controls the crystalline structure. (A) "consequence of" and (B) "byproduct of" suggest the cooling rate is a result of the structure, which is the opposite of what the passage states. (C) "exception to" suggests the cooling rate is unusual or doesn't follow a rule regarding the structure, which is not supported by the passage. Therefore, (D) is the correct answer.

Question 14

Correct Answer: A

The passage states that individuals' "front stage" behavior leads to the "concealment" of genuine intentions or private thoughts. "Concealment" means hiding something. Therefore, an individual's true disposition, or true nature, remains hidden or covered up.

- (A) "Veiled" means hidden or covered, which perfectly matches the idea of concealment in the passage.
- (B) "Accessible" means easily approached or seen, which is the opposite of what the passage suggests.
- (C) "Distorted" means twisted or misrepresented. While an impression might be distorted, the passage focuses on the *concealment* of the true disposition, not necessarily its alteration.
- (D) "Dynamic" means constantly changing or active. The passage describes a state of being hidden, not a characteristic of change.
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Question 15

Correct Answer: D

The passage states that the metabolic rates allow deep-sea fish to "conserve energy efficiently" in an environment with "limited food resources." This implies that their metabolic processes are slowed down or

reduced. (D) "Attenuated" means reduced in force, intensity, or value, which perfectly aligns with the idea of conserving energy through a lowered metabolic rate. (A) "Accelerated" means increased, which contradicts the need to conserve energy. (B) "Erratic" means unpredictable or irregular, which is not supported by the context of a consistent adaptation for survival. (C) "Robust" means strong and healthy, which describes the *outcome* of the adaptation (survival) but not the *nature* of the metabolic rate itself, which is described as being low to conserve energy.

Question 16

Correct Answer: A

The passage states that interpretive communities, by sharing strategies and assumptions, shape how readers understand a literary work. The blank needs a word that means "shape" or "affect" in this context. Looking at the options, (A) influence means to have an effect on or alter, which matches the idea that communities shape interpretations. (B) complicate means to make something more difficult, which is not directly supported by the text. (C) diverge means to separate and go in different directions, which contradicts the idea of communities sharing similar strategies. (D) stabilize means to make something firm or unchanging, which goes against the passage's emphasis on the subjective and constructed nature of meaning. Therefore, "influence" is the most logical and precise word.

Question 17

Correct Answer: D

The passage states that the tube worms "thrive" in extreme conditions and that their unique metabolic pathway "allows" them to continue living. This means the blank should describe how the worms maintain their life or sustain themselves. (D) subsist means to maintain or support oneself, especially at a minimal level, which fits the context of surviving through a specialized process in a unique environment. (A) regress means to return to

a former or less developed state. This contradicts the idea of thriving. (B) diverge means to separate and go in a different direction. This is unrelated to the worms' survival mechanism. (C) stagnate means to cease to flow or move, or to show no activity or development. This contradicts the idea of thriving and using a metabolic pathway to live.

Question 18

Correct Answer: A

The passage states that individuals "modify their attitudes or perceptions to achieve internal consistency" and "rationalizing their choices." This means they want their choices to appear in agreement or harmony with their beliefs. The word "congruent" means in agreement or harmony, which directly matches the context. (B) "Discordant" means lacking in harmony or agreement, which is the opposite of what the individuals are trying to achieve. (C) "Arbitrary" means based on random choice or personal whim, rather than any reason or system, which does not fit the idea of achieving consistency. (D) "Erroneous" means wrong or incorrect; while rationalization might lead to incorrect conclusions, the core idea is about making things *appear* consistent, not necessarily factually correct or incorrect.

Question 19

Correct Answer: B

The passage states that the symbiotic relationship between corals and algae is "acutely sensitive" and a "highly specific association" that is difficult to sustain in "changing oceans." This suggests that the requirements for maintaining this partnership are strict or difficult to meet. The word that best fits this meaning is "exacting," which means making great demands or requiring close attention.

(A) "variable" suggests the requirements change, which might be true but doesn't describe how difficult or strict they are.

(C) "flexible" means adaptable or easy to change, which contradicts the idea of a sensitive and specific association that is hard to sustain.

(D) "simple" means easy or straightforward, which is the opposite of what the passage implies about the requirements for this sensitive relationship.

Question 20

Correct Answer: B

The correct answer is (B), nurture. The text explains that the Cambodia Securities Exchange has an advantage in its ability to help "relatively small companies in Cambodia... thrive." The colon signals that the following phrase explains this advantage: the exchange connects these small companies to knowledgeable investors. This act of helping companies grow and develop is best described by the word "nurture."

(A) is incorrect because "designate" means to appoint or specify, which doesn't fit the context of helping companies thrive. (C) is incorrect because "preclude" means to prevent or exclude, which is the opposite of the supportive role described. (D) is incorrect because while the exchange might "assess" or evaluate companies, its key function described here is to help them grow, not just to evaluate them.