

## Tackling Guided Upper Level Synonym Questions

Following are some upper level synonym questions typical for the SSAT and ISEE. Each question is followed by an explanation of the correct answer and how you may reach it.

1. OBFUSCATE:

- (A) Redirect
- (B) Confuse
- (C) Raze
- (D) Measure
- (E) Define

*Obfuscate* means to make something complicated or confusing, so Choice **(B)** is the only synonym in the group provided.



If you're unsure of the meaning of the word given to you, try to rule out answers you believe are incorrect.

2. BRUTAL:

- (A) Genial
- (B) Coy
- (C) Endearing
- (D) Truculent
- (E) Fixed

The word *brutal* is easy enough, so the task is finding a synonym in the list of words provided. Once again, use the process of elimination to rule out possible options. The only synonym in the list is Choice **(D)**, *truculent*, which means savagely brutal.

3. VACUOUS:

- (A) Full
- (B) Lacking
- (C) Degenerate
- (D) Challenging
- (E) Unresponsive

*Vacuous* means lacking an idea or lacking substance — something that's empty. The only possible synonym in the provided choices is simply *lacking*, Choice **(B)**.

4. CABAL:

- (A) Luminary
- (B) Neophyte
- (C) Paltriness
- (D) Group
- (E) Wane



A *cabal* is a small group, so Choice (D) is the correct answer. This question is tough because if you don't know what a cabal is, you'll have a hard time ruling out answer choices. You can try and eliminate answer choices you believe are incorrect and simply guess if you don't know the word.

**5. FLIMSY:**

- (A) Tenuous
- (B) Quixotic
- (C) Clammy
- (D) Barbarous
- (E) Illustrious

With this question, you have an easy word but more difficult words to choose as a synonym. The correct answer is Choice (A) because *tenuous* means something that's flimsy or not solid, especially when referring to an argument or a concept.

## Practicing Upper Level Synonym Questions on Your Own

Try this set of upper level synonym questions similar to what you'll see on the SSAT and ISEE. Because you have to work quickly on the exam, practice working with a timer and try to answer these 10 questions in only 4 minutes or less.

**1. ARROGANT:**

- (A) Bumptious
- (B) Languid
- (C) Banal
- (D) Demure
- (E) Silent

**2. DISASTER:**

- (A) Meander
- (B) Evasiveness
- (C) Trial
- (D) Tribulation
- (E) Finesse

**3. LUGUBRIOUS:**

- (A) Obscure
- (B) Trite
- (C) Mournful
- (D) Placid
- (E) Mimic

**4. REVERENCE:**

- (A) Obeisance
- (B) Plebeian
- (C) Enactor
- (D) Quiescence
- (E) Bauble

**5. CURE:**

- (A) Panacea
- (B) Trinket
- (C) Banality
- (D) Mellifluousness
- (E) Vulgarity

**6. CURTAIL:**

- (A) Joy
- (B) Sublime
- (C) Resist
- (D) Avoid
- (E) Abbreviate

7. BUOYANT:  
(A) Nebulous  
(B) Buyable  
(C) Floatable  
(D) Selective  
(E) Redolent
8. BIBULOUS:  
(A) Messy  
(B) Absorbent  
(C) Reluctant  
(D) Noxious  
(E) Signal
9. PALLIATIVE:  
(A) Tacit  
(B) Tenacious  
(C) Tepid  
(D) Relieving  
(E) Tremorous
10. VERNACULAR:  
(A) Hope  
(B) Cauterization  
(C) Adjunct  
(D) Venerability  
(E) Speech

## Answers to Upper Level Synonym Questions

1. **A.** *Arrogant* and *bumptious* mean the same thing — they both refer to negative behavior where a person has an exaggerated self opinion.
2. **D.** *Disaster* and *tribulation* mean the same thing. They both refer to destruction.
3. **C.** *Luqubrious* means overly mournful, so the synonym is basically the definition of the word.
4. **A.** *Obeisance* is a gesture of respect or reverence so this word is the only possible synonym in the list.
5. **A.** A *panacea* is something that cures everything, so in this list of answer choices, Choice (A) is the only possible synonym.
6. **E.** If you *curtail* something, you cut it short, so *abbreviate*, Choice (E), is the correct answer.
7. **C.** If something is *buoyant*, it can float in the water, so the correct synonym is simply *floatable*.
8. **B.** *Bibulous* simply means *absorbent*, so that word is the correct synonym.
9. **D.** *Palliative* refers to something that provides relief, especially from pain.
10. **E.** *Vernacular* refers to common speech or slang, so *speech* is the correct answer.

## Tackling Guided Lower and Middle Level ISEE Sentence Completion Questions

Following are some lower and middle level sentence completion questions typical for the ISEE. Each question is followed by an explanation of the correct answer and how you may reach it.



Sentence completion questions are all about picking the right word or phrase in order to complete the idea or thought in the sentence.

## Tackling Guided Upper Level ISEE Sentence Completion Questions



Following are some upper level sentence completion questions typical for the ISEE. Each question is followed by an explanation of the correct answer and how you may reach it.

Sentence completion questions are all about picking the right word or phrase in order to complete the idea or thought in the sentence.

1. The musician's \_\_\_\_\_ performance made everyone stand in applause.
  - (A) noxious
  - (B) saturnine
  - (C) turbid
  - (D) meritorious

From the context of this sentence, you know that everyone stood in applause due to the performance. The only word that works in this sentence is Choice **(D)**, *meritorious*, which means deserving praise.

2. Although the \_\_\_\_\_ the man told the police was believable, it was later found to be untrue.
  - (A) soliloquy
  - (B) fluctuation
  - (C) canard
  - (D) vernacular

The correct answer is Choice **(C)**, *canard*, which by definition is an untrue story. Try to rule out word choices you know are incorrect so you can narrow down the answer.

3. The \_\_\_\_\_ approach to the problem ensured that no one stopped to consider some practical implications of carrying out the solution.
  - (A) pedantic
  - (B) enigmatic
  - (C) vituperative
  - (D) defunct

From the context, you know that you're looking for a word that conveys the meaning of something impractical or not practically considered. The only word that works is Choice **(A)**, *pedantic*, which means to be overly concerned with academic or book learning. In this context, *pedantic* means that the approach was overly *theoretical* and not so practical.

4. Because the student struggled with math, a \_\_\_\_\_ course in the basics was necessary.
  - (A) research
  - (B) distracting
  - (C) typical
  - (D) rudimentary

You're looking for the concept of basic in this sentence. The student struggled in math, so he needed a basic math course. The only word that works in this sentence is Choice (D), *rudimentary*, which means basic or elementary.

5. The \_\_\_\_ child began to \_\_\_\_ his older brother.
- (A) careful . . . annoy
  - (B) willful . . . acumen
  - (C) loud . . . vex
  - (D) distracted . . . cajole

From the context, you know that the child has a quality that does something to his older brother, although you don't know what. So find a word pair that simply makes sense within the context of the sentence. The best answer is Choice (C), the *loud* child began to *vex* (annoy or bother) his older brother.

## Practicing Upper Level ISEE Sentence Completion Questions on Your Own

Try this set of upper level sentence completion questions resembling questions you may see on the ISEE. Because you have to work quickly on the exam, practice working with a timer and try to answer these 10 questions in only 4 minutes or less.

1. The \_\_\_\_ civic club gave its leftover monies to another local group after they disbanded.
  - (A) successful
  - (B) defunct
  - (C) affiliated
  - (D) distorted
2. His convoluted discussion \_\_\_\_ the entire group.
  - (A) plummeted
  - (B) crowded
  - (C) impetus
  - (D) stymied
3. After hours of no accomplishment, the team became \_\_\_\_.
  - (A) apathetic
  - (B) penchant
  - (C) specious
  - (D) caliber
4. Her \_\_\_\_ speech sounded great, but everyone knew it was pointless.
  - (A) engendered
  - (B) bombastic
  - (C) kindled
  - (D) replete
5. Despite trying to make the situation better, John finally \_\_\_\_ himself to the inevitable fact that he would lose his job.
  - (A) corrected
  - (B) abhorred
  - (C) removed
  - (D) resigned
6. The councilman \_\_\_\_ the motion when he realized he didn't have adequate support.
  - (A) saturated
  - (B) ensconced
  - (C) rescinded
  - (D) masticated

7. The \_\_\_\_\_ style of the Victorian room was charming to some and tacky to others.
- (A) brusque
  - (B) vestige
  - (C) bedlam
  - (D) baroque
8. Her \_\_\_\_\_ behavior made her even more attractive.
- (A) demure
  - (B) derogatory
  - (C) baroque
  - (D) cryptic
9. She \_\_\_\_\_ the two pieces of art on the wall in the gallery.
- (A) invoked
  - (B) characterized
  - (C) subterfuge
  - (D) juxtaposed
10. The \_\_\_\_\_ conversation was difficult at best, but Gina knew she could \_\_\_\_\_ the conflict in time.
- (A) entwined . . . recover
  - (B) sonorous . . . abate
  - (C) convoluted . . . resolve
  - (D) degreed . . . resolute

## Answers to Upper Level ISEE Sentence Completion Questions

1. **B. *Defunct*** means no longer functioning. Considering that the group gave its monies away before disbanding, this word completes the meaning of the sentence.
2. **D.** The word ***stymie*** means to stump or confuse. Considering the context of the sentence, this word is the only one that completes the meaning.
3. **A. *Apathetic*** means with little emotion or caring. The sentence tells the reader that after no accomplishment, the team started to lose interest and didn't care.
4. **B. *Bombastic*** means impressive but meaningless language. Within the context of the sentence, this word is the only answer that makes sense.
5. **D.** In this context, the word ***resigned*** means to accept. The sentence is saying that despite John's best efforts, he accepted the fact that he would lose his job.
6. **C.** The word ***rescind*** means to repeal, and it's the only word in the group that completes the meaning of the sentence.
7. **E. *Baroque*** means overly decorated, so within the context of the sentence, this word is the only one that completes the meaning of the sentence.
8. **A. *Demure*** means modest, and in the context of this sentence, it's the only answer choice that provides a positive characteristic.
9. **E. *Juxtapose*** means to place two items side by side, which is the only word that makes sense in this sentence.
10. **C.** You need two words that complete the meaning of the sentence. The best answer is Choice (C), so you have "the ***convoluted*** conversation" and "***resolve*** the conflict." When you consider the other answer choices, Choice (C) is the only pair that makes sense within the context of the sentence.