



Literacy at Hartford Public High School

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Sentence Completion

Sentence completion questions account for about one quarter of the marks for the verbal section of SAT I. Each question contains one or two blanks, and you have to find the best answer choice to make the sentence make complete sense. Be sure to study the sentence carefully so that you notice all the clues built into the sentence. On the actual test the sentence completion questions will be graded from easy to hard. On average you will need a little under one minute to answer each question.

Sentence Completion questions measure your:

1. knowledge of the meanings of words
2. ability to understand how the different parts of a sentence fit logically together

Here are some general hints for answering Sentence Completion questions.

1. Read the entire sentence to yourself.
2. Watch for introductory or connecting words and phrases like "but," "not," "because," etc.
3. In sentences with two blanks, make sure the words for both blanks make sense in the sentence.
4. Start by working with one blank at a time.
5. Stay within the meaning of the sentence.
6. Before you mark your answer, read the complete sentence with your choice filled in.

Transition Words

Transition words and phrases are like traffic signs that alert the reader about what's coming next in the sentence or the paragraph. They provide a guide to steer the reader along the road toward a complete and accurate thought. Most of us focus on the new, unusual vocabulary words in a lesson. We understand that, in order for a student to understand what has been read, it is important to know the meanings of key words. We often overlook the smaller, common transition words, assuming that the students know how they function in a sentence. This can lead to problems of comprehension. As our students read, we should point out how the actual reading passage makes use of connecting words to join ideas and to inform the reader of the structure of the sentence and paragraph. We should require students to explain why a particular transition word has been used in a particular context. We should also encourage students to use such

words in their bell work, in their test answers, and in all writing that they do for a class.

Here are some common types of transitions, along with examples for each type.

Sequence: again, also, and, and then, finally, first, second, third, next, still, too

Time: after a few days, after awhile, afterward, as long as, as soon as, at last, at that time, before, earlier, immediately, in the meantime, in the past, later, meanwhile, now, shortly, soon, then, until, when

Comparison: again, also, in the same way, once more

Contrast: although, but, despite, even though, however, in contrast, instead, on the contrary, on the one hand, on the other hand, still though yet

Examples: after all, even, for example, for instance, in fact, specifically, such as, to illustrate, the following example

Cause and Effect: as a result, because, consequently, for this purpose, so, then, therefore, to this end

Place: above, adjacent to, below, beyond, closer to, elsewhere, far, further on, here, near, nearby, opposite to, there, to the left, to the right

Summary of Conclusion: as a result, as has been noted, as I have said, as we have seen, as mentioned earlier, in any event, in conclusion, in other words, on the whole, therefore, to summarize

Example

Consider how you'd explain to your classes the correct response to the following sentence completions.

Many people at that time believed that spices help preserve food; however, Hall found that many marketed spices were _____ bacteria, moulds and yeasts.

1. devoid of
2. teeming with
3. improved by
4. destroyed by
5. active against

Each occupation has its own _____; bankers, lawyers and computer professionals, for example, all use among themselves language which outsiders have difficulty following. (What word would make sense here? Find a suitable SAT-type word in a thesaurus.)