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ESSENTIAL WORDS FOR THE GRE[®]

2ND EDITION

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- 800 college- and graduate-level words you need to know for success on the Graduate Record Exam
- A diagnostic pretest to help you gauge the strength of your current vocabulary
- Extensive sentence-completion exercises with answers
- Words defined and used in context
- A concluding posttest with answers to help you measure your progress

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Two key words in the sentence—*verbiage* and *implication*—are advanced words. It would be impossible to figure out the central meaning of the sentence without knowing the meaning of *verbiage* (an excess of words for the purpose)—and if you don't know the meaning of *implication* (that which is hinted or suggested) you will be hard-pressed to follow the logic of the sentence.

Advanced vocabulary also plays a central part in the answer choices given for this question. Once again, this question would be impossible to answer without knowledge of the meanings of these difficult words. If you know that *semantics* means the meaning and interpretation of words, *obfuscation* means the act of confusing or obscuring, and *equivocation* means the intentional use of vague language, the sentence makes good sense.

READING QUESTIONS

Next, let's consider a GRE-level reading passage and questions. It uses quite a lot of advanced vocabulary. Do you know the difficult words in the passage and in the questions that follow it?

- To chop a stick, to catch a fly, to pile a heap of sand, is a satisfying action; for the sand stays for a while in its novel arrangement, proclaiming to the surrounding level that we have made it our instrument, while the fly will never stir nor
- (5) the stick grow together again in all eternity. If the impulse that has thus left its indelible mark on things is constant in our own bosom, the world will have been permanently improved and humanized by our action. Nature cannot but be more favorable to those ideas which have once found an
- (10) efficacious champion.
- Plastic impulses find in this way an immediate sanction in the sense of victory and dominion which they carry with them; it is so evident a proof of power in ourselves to see things and animals bent out of their habitual form and obedient instead to our idea. But a far weightier sanction
- (15) immediately follows. Man depends on this for his experience, yet by automatic action he changes these very things so that it becomes possible that by his action he should promote his welfare. He may, of course, no less readily precipitate his ruin. The animal is more subject to vicissitudes
- (20) than the plant, which makes no effort to escape them or to give chase to what it feeds upon. The greater perils of action, however, are in animals covered partly by fertility, partly by adaptability, partly by success. The mere possibil-

REVIEW 15

Matching

Match each word with its definition:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. coalesce | a. to systematize |
| 2. coda | b. cause to become one |
| 3. codify | c. assemblage of diverse elements |
| 4. cognizant | d. overly polite |
| 5. collage | e. proportional |
| 6. commensurate | f. self-satisfied |
| 7. compendium | g. something that makes up a whole |
| 8. complacent | h. something that summarizes |
| 9. complaisant | i. brief, comprehensive summary |
| 10. complement | j. informed; conscious |

Fill-ins

Choose the best word to fill in the blank in each sentence.

coalesced

coda

codification

cognizant

collage

commensurate

compendium

complacent

complaisant

complement

1. The final chapter of the scientist's book is a _____ in which the author reflects on her life and the important role science played in it.
2. The former chain-smoker describes herself as "Now a _____, passive nonsmoker."
3. A recent theory of how the Earth got its moon is that a very large object collided with the Earth about 4.5 billion years ago to cause iron-free material that gradually _____ into the Moon.
4. One of the cornerstones of capitalism is the conviction that a worker's rewards should be _____ with his or her contribution.
5. Another important _____ of modern civil law in addition to the Napoleonic Code is the German Civil Code (German *Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*) that went into effect in the German Empire in 1900.
6. When one is studying a complex novel, it is helpful to have a _____ that gives information about characters, setting, plot, etc.
7. Traditionally, white wine is considered a good _____ to fish, whereas red wine is considered to be more suitable for meat.
8. The company's CEO is worried that this quarter's record profits will make his employees _____ .

debauchery *n.* corruption

*The prince lived a life of **debauchery** until he discovered a spiritual dimension to life.*

decorum *n.* proper behavior

*When addressing the nation, the president generally has an air of **decorum**.*

The adjective is *decorous*.

defame *v.* to malign; harm someone's reputation

*The ancient Greek philosopher Socrates was **defamed** as a teacher who corrupted the morals of his students.*

REVIEW 19

Matching

Match each word with its definition:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 1. covetous | a. cowardly |
| 2. cozen | b. scarcity |
| 3. craven | c. to intimidate; discourage |
| 4. credence | d. desiring something owned by another |
| 5. credo | e. acceptance of something as true |
| 6. daunt | f. to harm someone's reputation |
| 7. dearth | g. corruption |
| 8. debauchery | h. to mislead by trick or fraud |
| 9. decorum | i. statement of belief or principle; creed |
| 10. defame | j. proper behavior |

Fill-ins

Choose the best word to fill in the blank in each sentence.

covets	cozens	craven	credence	credo
daunting	dearth	debauchery	decorum	defaming

1. Because so many young men were killed in the war, there is a _____ of potential husbands for the young women of the village.
2. The general called his advisor's suggestion that he surrender "the _____ proposal of a coward."
3. The sales pitch _____ potential customers by omitting the fact that the product has been superseded by far superior products available at the same price.

UNIT 22

diffidence *n.* shyness; lack of confidence

*As a result of the strength of his opposition to the Vietnam War Senator Eugene McCarthy overcame his **diffidence** and ran against President Lyndon Johnson for the Democratic nomination for president.*

diffuse *v.* to spread out

*The idea of equality and liberty **diffused** through society after the French Revolution.*

Diffuse is also an adjective meaning wordy; rambling; spread out.

*This essay is so **diffuse** it is difficult to follow its central argument.*

digression *n.* act of straying from the main point

*The novel Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance by Robert M. Pirsig contains many fascinating **digressions** from the main story that discuss topics such as Platonic philosophy.*

Terms from the Arts, Sciences, and Social Sciences

Platonic: refers to the philosophy of Plato, an ancient Greek philosopher who held that both actual things and ideas such as beauty and truth are copies of transcendent ideas

The adjective *platonc* (with a small “p”) means spiritual, without sensual desire, or theoretical.

dirge *n.* funeral hymn

*The music critic described the movement of the symphony portraying the hero’s last days as “**dirgelike**.”*

disabuse *v.* to free from a misconception

*The chairman of the Federal Reserve used his testimony before Congress to **disabuse** his audience of the idea that the business cycle had been eliminated by the unprecedented period of prosperity.*

discerning *adj.* perceptive; exhibiting keen insight and good judgment

***Discerning** movie critics have praised the work of producer Stanley Kubrick, who produced such excellent films as 2001, Dr. Strangelove, A Clockwork Orange, and Lolita.*

3. Academic writing should be erudite without being _____ .
4. The job of political scientists is the objective study of government and politics; thus they are expected to be aloof from _____ politics.
5. The people of the area speak a _____ based on English, Spanish, and French.
6. According to archeologists, Roman tiles were not the _____ objects we see today; rather, they were painted a variety of vivid colors.
7. In his later years Lewis was able to indulge the _____ for performing music that he had as a young man.
8. The business professor assigned her students to select the three firms they would consider _____ for other companies to imitate.
9. No funeral _____ for the slain general was as eloquent as the looks of grief on the faces of the mourners at his funeral.
10. The historian is unable to reach a definite conclusion about when the battle began because of a _____ of evidence.

Sense or Nonsense

Indicate whether each sentence makes good sense or not. Put S (SENSE) if it does, and put N (NONSENSE) if it does not.

1. Every weekend the Scott family has a gathering on the patois. _____
2. The museum has an exhibition of elaborately carved pendants. _____
3. There is a paucity of specialist doctors in many rural areas of the United States. _____
4. The class became bored listening to the pedantic, long-winded professor. _____
5. Steve's penchant for collecting things when he was a child led his mother to speculate that he might become a museum curate. _____

UNIT 56

penury *n.* extreme poverty

*The autobiography tells the story of the billionaire's journey from **penury** to riches beyond his imagining.*

peregrination *n.* a wandering from place to place

*Swami Vivekananda's **peregrinations** took him all over India.*

- **CRED** (BELIEVE, TRUST) *Latin*
credo = statement of belief or principle; creed
credentials = evidence concerning one's right to confidence or authority
credible = believable; plausible
credence = acceptance of something as true
incredulous = skeptical; doubtful
- **CRE/CRESC/CRET/CRU** (RISE, GROW) *Latin*
accrue = increase; come about as a result of growth
creescent = increasing; waxing, as the moon
crecendo = in music, a gradual increase in the volume or intensity of sound
increment = something added; process of increasing
increscent = waxing; growing; showing a surface that is ever larger and lighted
- **CRIT** (SEPARATE, JUDGE) *Greek*
critical = inclined to judge severely; characterized by careful judgment
criterion = a standard on which a judgment can be made
hypocritical = professing beliefs that one does not possess; false
criticism = a critical comment or judgment
critique = a critical review or commentary

Root Work 14

Match each word with its definition:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. technocrat | a. believable; plausible |
| 2. incredulous | b. producing or creating |
| 3. accrue | c. government by priests |
| 4. miscreate | d. waxing; growing |
| 5. critical | e. standard on which a judgment can be made |
| 6. procreation | f. strong believer in technology |
| 7. criterion | g. increase; come about as a result of growth |
| 8. increscent | h. inclined to judge severely |
| 9. theocracy | i. make or shape badly |
| 10. credible | j. skeptical; doubtful |

ROOT ROUNDUP 15

- **COUR/CUR** (RUN, COURSE) *Latin*
concurrence = agreement in opinion; simultaneous occurrence
courier = a messenger
curriculum = the courses offered by an educational institution
precursor = a forerunner or predecessor
current = a steady, smooth, onward movement

- **SEC/SECT/SEGM** (CUT) *Latin*
sectile = relating to a mineral that can be cut smoothly by a knife
dissect = cut apart
intersection = the process or result of cutting across or through
secant = a straight line that intersects a curve at two or more points
segmented = divided into parts
- **SECU/SEQU** (FOLLOW) *Latin*
prosecutor = one who initiates a civil or criminal court action
sequel = something that follows
inconsequential = insignificant; unimportant
obsequious = overly submissive
sequacious = disposed to follow another
- **SEMI** (HALF, PARTLY) *Latin*
semiterrestrial = partially living on land
semiannual = occurring twice a year
semiaquatic = not entirely adapted for living in water
semicircle = half of a circle
semिताur = in mythology, a creature that is half-man and half-bull

Root Work 49

Match each word with its definition:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1. secede | a. act of keeping apart from social contact |
| 2. obsequious | b. a document written by hand |
| 3. sectile | c. something that follows |
| 4. sequel | d. cut apart |
| 5. manuscript | e. withdraw from membership in an alliance |
| 6. semिताur | f. half-man and half-bull |
| 7. seclusion | g. set down a rule |
| 8. semiaquatic | h. not entirely adapted for living in water |
| 9. dissect | i. overly submissive |
| 10. prescribe | j. relating to a mineral that can be cut smoothly by a knife |

ROOT ROUNDUP 50

- **SENS/SENT** (FEEL, BE AWARE) *Latin*
sensate = perceived by the senses
insensible = unconscious; unresponsive
sentiment = a view based on emotion rather than reason
sentient = aware, conscious, able to perceive
sentisection = vivisection performed without the use of anesthesia

POSTTEST ANSWERS

- | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. C | 11. C | 21. C |
| 2. C | 12. B | 22. B |
| 3. B | 13. D | 23. E |
| 4. B | 14. E | 24. A |
| 5. A | 15. D | 25. B |
| 6. B | 16. C | 26. C |
| 7. D | 17. B | 27. E |
| 8. C | 18. E | 28. A |
| 9. C | 19. B | 29. D |
| 10. A | 20. A | 30. B |

YOUR POSTTEST SCORE

- 1-5** CORRECT ANSWERS: **VERY POOR**
- 6-9** CORRECT ANSWERS: **POOR**
- 10-14** CORRECT ANSWERS: **BELOW AVERAGE**
- 15-18** CORRECT ANSWERS: **AVERAGE**
- 19-23** CORRECT ANSWERS: **GOOD**
- 24-27** CORRECT ANSWERS: **VERY GOOD**
- 28-30** CORRECT ANSWERS: **EXCELLENT**

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