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Practice Questions

Try all 30 first, then check the answer key at the back.

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1. Aberrant

- A. Departing from the normal or expected; deviating from the standard
- B. Following established norms or rules
- C. Occurring at regular intervals
- D. Strongly attached to traditional beliefs

2. Abstruse

- A. Difficult to understand; obscure and complex
- B. Clearly explained and easy to grasp
- C. Relating to abstract art
- D. Brief and concise

3. Acrimony

- A. Bitterness or ill feeling, especially in speech or manner
- B. A sweet, pleasant disposition
- C. Sincere praise and admiration
- D. A formal legal agreement

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4. Admonish

- A. To warn or reprimand someone firmly; to urge caution
- B. To praise and encourage enthusiastically
- C. To ignore a problem completely
- D. To formally apologize

5. Adulterate

- A. To make something impure by adding an inferior or harmful substance
- B. To improve quality by adding better ingredients
- C. To preserve through careful storage
- D. To authenticate or certify



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6. Aesthetic

- A. Relating to beauty, artistic taste, or the appreciation of beauty
- B. Relating to practical utility and function
- C. Relating to moral or ethical principles
- D. Relating to scientific measurement

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7. Affable

- A. Friendly, pleasant, and easy to talk to; amiable
- B. Cold and unfriendly in manner
- C. Easily angered or irritated
- D. Stubbornly resistant to change

8. Alacrity

- A. Brisk and cheerful readiness; eager willingness
- B. Reluctance and unwillingness to act
- C. Slowness and deliberate caution
- D. Confusion and indecision

9. Ambiguous

- A. Having more than one possible meaning; unclear or open to interpretation
- B. Having a single clear and definitive meaning
- C. Strongly and explicitly stated
- D. Completely irrelevant

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10. Ambivalent

- A. Having mixed or conflicting feelings about something or someone
- B. Having a single, strong, clear feeling
- C. Completely uninterested or detached
- D. Strongly committed to one position



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11. Ameliorate

- A. To make something bad or unsatisfactory better; to improve
- B. To make something worse or more difficult
- C. To maintain something at its current state
- D. To thoroughly examine something

12. Anachronism

- A. Something placed in a wrong time period; out of its proper historical context
- B. A forward-looking or futuristic idea
- C. A widely held but false belief
- D. A sudden unexpected change

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13. Anecdote

- A. A short, often amusing or interesting story about a real person or event
- B. A formal scientific argument or proof
- C. A moral lesson drawn from a fable
- D. A detailed statistical summary

14. Anomaly

- A. Something that deviates from what is standard, normal, or expected; an irregularity
- B. A pattern that confirms established theories
- C. A perfectly average or typical example
- D. A gradual, predictable change

15. Antithesis

- A. The direct opposite of something; a contrast or opposition of ideas
- B. A perfect example or representative instance
- C. A comparison using 'like' or 'as'
- D. A statement that appears contradictory but may be true

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16. Apathy

- A. Lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern; indifference
- B. Intense passion or enthusiasm
- C. Deep anxiety about outcomes
- D. Fierce opposition or hostility

17. Appease

- A. To pacify or satisfy someone by conceding to their demands; to soothe
- B. To provoke or incite someone to greater anger
- C. To refuse to negotiate under any circumstances
- D. To punish or discipline

18. Arduous

- A. Involving or requiring strenuous effort; difficult and tiring
- B. Effortless and requiring little energy
- C. Interesting and mentally stimulating
- D. Gradual and slow-paced

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19. Articulate

- A. (adj.) Able to express ideas clearly and fluently; well-spoken
- B. Unable to express thoughts clearly
- C. Using very few words; extremely concise
- D. Deliberately confusing or misleading

20. Ascertain

- A. To find out something for certain; to determine
- B. To guess or estimate without evidence
- C. To conceal or hide information
- D. To doubt or question the truth of

21. Assiduous

- A. Showing great care and effort; diligent and persistent
- B. Working carelessly and without attention
- C. Quick and impulsive in decision-making
- D. Overly cautious to the point of inaction



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22. Attenuate

- A. To reduce the force, effect, or value of something; to weaken or thin out
- B. To increase or strengthen something
- C. To completely eliminate something
- D. To delay or postpone

23. Audacious

- A. Showing a willingness to take bold risks; daring, adventurous
- B. Extremely cautious and risk-averse
- C. Polite and respectful of authority
- D. Indifferent and uninvolved

24. Austere

- A. Severe or strict in manner or attitude; having no comforts or luxuries; plain
- B. Excessively luxurious and indulgent
- C. Cheerful and lighthearted
- D. Richly decorated and ornate

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25. Banal

- A. So lacking in originality that it has become predictable and dull; commonplace, trite
- B. Fresh, original, and thought-provoking
- C. Complex and difficult to understand
- D. Shocking or offensive

26. Benevolent

- A. Well-meaning and kindly; disposed to do good
- B. Selfish and concerned only with personal gain
- C. Strictly neutral or impartial
- D. Cruel and intending harm



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27. Brevity

- A. Concise and exact use of words; briefness in time or expression
- B. Excessive length and wordiness
- C. Complexity and difficulty to understand
- D. Clarity and precision of thought

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28. Cacophony

- A. A harsh, discordant mixture of sounds
- B. A pleasant or harmonious combination of sounds
- C. Complete silence or absence of sound
- D. A single, clear musical tone

29. Candid

- A. Truthful and straightforward; frank and honest, even if uncomfortable
- B. Diplomatic and vague to avoid conflict
- C. Secretly deceptive or two-faced
- D. Excessively polite and flattering

30. Caustic

- A. Sarcastic in a scathing or bitter way; capable of burning or corroding organic tissue
- B. Gentle and complimentary in tone
- C. Soft-spoken and indirect
- D. Funny and warmly playful



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Answer Key & Explanations

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1. A — Departing from the normal or expected; deviating from the standard

Aberrant means deviating from what is normal. 'The scientist's aberrant results puzzled the lab.' SAT context: aberrant behavior, aberrant data.

2. A — Difficult to understand; obscure and complex

Abstruse refers to things that are difficult to comprehend, especially due to deep complexity. 'The philosopher's abstruse arguments were incomprehensible to casual readers.'

3. A — Bitterness or ill feeling, especially in speech or manner

Acrimony is bitter, angry feeling or expression. 'The divorce proceedings were marked by considerable acrimony between the former spouses.'

4. A — To warn or reprimand someone firmly; to urge caution

To admonish is to give a warning or mild rebuke. 'The teacher admonished the students for arriving late, reminding them of class rules.'

5. A — To make something impure by adding an inferior or harmful substance

Adulterate means to corrupt or make impure. 'The scandal involved adulterating olive oil with cheaper vegetable oil and selling it as premium product.'

6. A — Relating to beauty, artistic taste, or the appreciation of beauty

Aesthetic relates to beauty or the philosophy of art. 'She had a refined aesthetic sensibility, preferring minimalist designs over ornate decoration.'

7. A — Friendly, pleasant, and easy to talk to; amiable

Affable means having a pleasant, approachable manner. 'The affable politician won votes with his warm smile and ability to connect with ordinary citizens.'

8. A — Brisk and cheerful readiness; eager willingness

Alacrity means prompt, enthusiastic willingness. 'She agreed to help with alacrity, jumping up immediately and volunteering for extra tasks.'

9. A — Having more than one possible meaning; unclear or open to interpretation

Ambiguous means open to multiple interpretations. 'The politician's ambiguous statement left voters unsure of her actual position on the issue.'

10. A — Having mixed or conflicting feelings about something or someone

Ambivalent means feeling two contradictory emotions simultaneously. 'She was ambivalent about moving abroad — excited by the opportunity but sad to leave her family.'

11. A — To make something bad or unsatisfactory better; to improve

Ameliorate means to improve a difficult situation. 'New policies were implemented to ameliorate the living conditions in the overcrowded prison.'



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12. A — Something placed in a wrong time period; out of its proper historical context

An anachronism is something that doesn't belong to its time period. 'A clock in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar is an anachronism — mechanical clocks didn't exist in ancient Rome.'

13. A — A short, often amusing or interesting story about a real person or event

An anecdote is a brief personal story. In SAT passages, anecdotes are often used to introduce a broader argument. 'The author opens with an amusing anecdote about her first day as a teacher.'

14. A — Something that deviates from what is standard, normal, or expected; an irregularity

An anomaly is an outlier or irregularity. 'The paleontologist noted an anomaly in the fossil record that challenged the accepted evolutionary timeline.'

15. A — The direct opposite of something; a contrast or opposition of ideas

Antithesis means the exact opposite. 'Honesty is the antithesis of deception.' In rhetoric, it refers to juxtaposing contrasting ideas.

16. A — Lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern; indifference

Apathy is a lack of interest or motivation. 'Voter apathy remained high despite efforts to increase civic engagement among young adults.'

17. A — To pacify or satisfy someone by conceding to their demands; to soothe

To appease is to calm someone, often by giving them what they want. 'The manager tried to appease the dissatisfied customer by offering a full refund.'

18. A — Involving or requiring strenuous effort; difficult and tiring

Arduous means physically or mentally demanding. 'The arduous climb to the mountain summit took three days and exhausted even experienced hikers.'

19. A — (adj.) Able to express ideas clearly and fluently; well-spoken

Articulate means expressing oneself clearly. 'The articulate spokesperson explained the company's complex policy in language that non-experts could understand.'

20. A — To find out something for certain; to determine

To ascertain is to find out definitively. 'Investigators worked to ascertain the cause of the bridge collapse before issuing a public report.'

21. A — Showing great care and effort; diligent and persistent

Assiduous means hardworking and thorough. 'Her assiduous preparation for the exam — reading every source, reviewing every note — paid off with a top score.'

22. A — To reduce the force, effect, or value of something; to weaken or thin out

To attenuate is to reduce in strength or intensity. 'The drug was found to attenuate the symptoms without fully curing the disease.'

23. A — Showing a willingness to take bold risks; daring, adventurous

Audacious means boldly daring, sometimes to the point of being shocking. 'The audacious plan to tunnel under the border seemed impossible, but it succeeded.'

24. A — Severe or strict in manner or attitude; having no comforts or luxuries; plain

Austere can mean both stern in manner and lacking comfort or decoration. 'The monk lived an austere life:'



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simple food, a bare cell, and daily labor.'

25. A — So lacking in originality that it has become predictable and dull; commonplace, trite

Banal means tiresomely ordinary. 'The film's plot was criticized as banal — a predictable love story with no surprises.'

26. A — Well-meaning and kindly; disposed to do good

Benevolent means generous and kind-hearted. 'The benevolent donor anonymously funded scholarships for hundreds of low-income students.'

27. A — Concise and exact use of words; brevity in time or expression

Brevity means shortness or conciseness. 'She admired the author's brevity — he conveyed profound emotions in just a few well-chosen words.' As Shakespeare wrote: 'Brevity is the soul of wit.'

28. A — A harsh, discordant mixture of sounds

Cacophony is a harsh, jarring noise. 'The construction site was a cacophony of drilling, hammering, and shouting that made conversation impossible.'

29. A — Truthful and straightforward; frank and honest, even if uncomfortable

Candid means direct and honest. 'I appreciate your candid feedback on my draft — I'd rather hear hard truths now than submit a flawed essay.'

30. A — Sarcastic in a scathing or bitter way; capable of burning or corroding organic tissue

Caustic means sharply sarcastic or corrosive. 'The critic's caustic review of the novel — 'a masterpiece of mediocrity' — devastated the young author.'



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