Verbal: text completion and sentence equivalence

Original classroom teaching; not an official form or score predictor

GRE Verbal: Text Completion and Sentence Equivalence

- Complete a sentence or short passage with one, two or three blanks (text completion).
- In sentence **equivalence** 等义关系, choose the two words that each complete a sentence and give it the same meaning.
- Use logic and context to choose a word, such as **arduous** 艰难的 for a task that is long and hard.

Predict before you look

- Cover the options. Read the whole sentence and say, in your own words, what the blank must mean.
- Find the clue: a reason ("because"), a contrast ("although", "but"), a restatement after a colon, or an example.
- Then choose the option closest to your prediction.

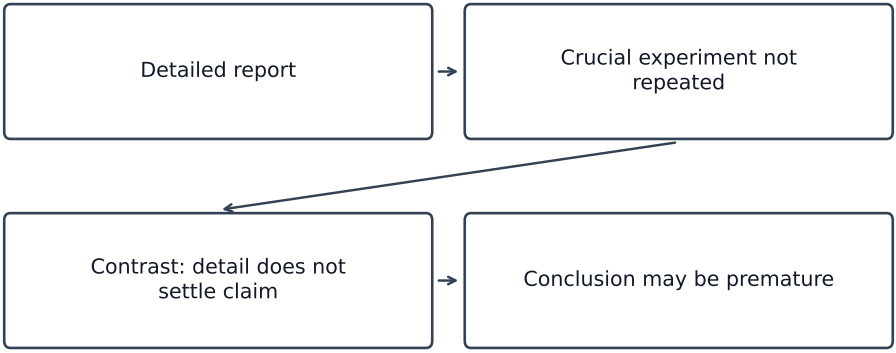
Text completion with several blanks

- Each blank has its own column of three choices. All blanks must be right for the mark.
- Start with the blank that has the clearest clue; then check the others against it.
- Read the finished sentence: the choices must make sense together.

Sentence equivalence

- Choose exactly two of six options. Both must fit the sentence, and both completed sentences must mean the same.
- Two synonyms can both be wrong if neither fits the logic. A word that fits may have no partner with the same meaning.
- Check grammar, tone and logic, not only dictionary meaning.

Figure: Sentence equivalence



- A detailed report does not settle a claim whose crucial experiment was never

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Worked example: a contrast clue

- "Although" signals a contrast between how it looked and how it was to build.
- Prediction: "hard work".
- For equivalence, "**arduous**" and "demanding" both fit and give the same meaning; "easy" and "effortless" are a pair of synonyms that reverse the contrast.

Worked example: an original application

- Complete the original sentence: “Although the reviewer admired the report’s detail, she found its conclusion _____ because its crucial experiment had not been repeated.” A. conclusive B. premature C. exhaustive D. irrelevant E. inevitable
- **B, premature.** The unreplicated crucial experiment makes a settled conclusion too early.
- Although contrasts admiration for detail with criticism of the conclusion.
- Conclusive and inevitable oppose the criticism; exhaustive describes completeness, not unsupported timing; irrelevant would require evidence that the conclusion concerns the wrong issue.

Independent transfer

- Sentence Equivalence: select exactly two of six choices. “Far from endorsing the proposal without reservation, the committee offered only _____ support.” A. qualified B. unconditional C. cautious D. unanimous E. enthusiastic F. immediate
- **A and C.** Both produce support limited by reservations.
- Unconditional contradicts the explicit contrast.
- Unanimous concerns how many members agree; immediate concerns timing.

Common errors

- Choosing a word because it is difficult or sounds impressive.
- Ignoring a contrast word.
- In sentence equivalence, choosing two synonyms that do not fit.

Common errors (2)

- Choosing two words that fit but give different meanings.
- In multi-blank items, checking each blank alone, not the whole sentence.

Key terms

- **equivalence**: Here, the requirement that two completed sentences have the same meaning.
- **arduous**: Needing a lot of effort; difficult and tiring.

Check yourself

- "Her praise was _____: she admired the method but doubted the results." Predict a meaning.
- In sentence equivalence, how many options must you choose?
- Can a pair of synonyms be the wrong answer? Why?