Commonly Confused Words

Standard difficulty · 20 questions · 40 marks · Time: 36 minutes

Name: _____ Date: _____ Score: ____ / 40

Write full answers in Sections B and C. Answers are on the last page — try every question first!

Section A — Choose the correct answer — 8 × 1 = 8 marks

1. Which sentence uses the WRONG word?
   (a) Volunteers canvass for votes before the class-monitor election.
   (b) He likes to flaunt his expensive watch.
   (c) The captain faced censor for his careless remarks.
   (d) The venal officer took a bribe.

2. Which sentence uses the right word?
   (a) The board may censor violent scenes in the film.
   (b) The players returned to their respectful countries.
   (c) An uninterested judge has nothing to gain from the case.
   (d) A short speech will proceed the prize-giving.

3. Which sentence uses the WRONG word?
   (a) People who immigrate to Canada must apply for a visa.
   (b) An eminent judge chaired the inquiry.
   (c) The couple decided to adopt a baby girl.
   (d) The doctor will proscribe an antibiotic.

4. Which sentence uses the right word?
   (a) A machine is immoral; it has no idea of right or wrong.
   (b) Forgetting to wave was only a venal fault.
   (c) The complacent host agreed to every request.
   (d) The teacher tried to elicit answers from the class.

5. Which sentence uses the WRONG word?
   (a) The new law will prescribe the sale of plastic bags.
   (b) Drivers who flout traffic rules are fined.
   (c) He was uninterested in the cricket match and fell asleep.
   (d) The witness gave a credible account of the accident.

6. Which sentence uses the right word?
   (a) Cheating the poor is immoral.
   (b) Please be discrete and keep this news private.
   (c) Do not grow complaisant after one good result.
   (d) Only a credible person would believe that rumour.

7. Which sentence uses the WRONG word?

(a) A mirage is an optical illusion.

(b) Many families emigrate from Kerala to the Gulf.

(c) This car is economical on fuel.

(d) From his silence, we can imply that he agrees.

8. Which sentence uses the right word?

(a) Her ingenious smile showed she suspected nothing.

(b) The data was split into discreet groups.

(c) The country needs strong economic growth.

(d) Dark clouds warned that a storm was eminent.

Section B — Short answer 8 × 2 = 16 marks

9. Fill in each blank with the right word: (a) The poem makes an ____ to a famous fairy tale. (illusion / allusion) (b) Camels ____ well to life in the desert. (adapt / adopt)

10. Fill in each blank with the right word: (a) Please ____ to gate number four. (proceed / precede) (b) The painter stretched a new ____. (canvass / canvas)

11. Fill in each blank with the right word: (a) Be ____ to your elders. (respective / respectful) (b) Are you trying to ____ that I am lying? (imply / infer)

12. Fill in each blank with the right word: (a) The ____ device cleans windows on its own. (ingenious / ingenuous) (b) The new law will ____ the sale of plastic bags. (prescribe / proscribe)

13. Fill in each blank with the right word: (a) Be ____ to your elders. (respectful / respective) (b) A machine is ____; it has no idea of right or wrong. (immoral / amoral)

14. Fill in each blank with the right word: (a) The country needs strong ____ growth. (economical / economic) (b) Cheating the poor is ____. (immoral / amoral)

15. Fill in each blank with the right word: (a) Her ____ smile showed she suspected nothing. (ingenious / ingenuous) (b) People who ____ to Canada must apply for a visa. (immigrate / emigrate)

16. Fill in each blank with the right word: (a) The ____ officer took a bribe. (venal / venial) (b) Camels ____ well to life in the desert. (adopt / adapt)

Section C — Longer answers — 4 × 4 = 16 marks

17. Write two sentences of your own to show the difference between “allusion” and “illusion”.

18. Write two sentences of your own to show the difference between “economic” and “economical”.

19. Choose the right word from the brackets for each sentence:
(1) Volunteers ____ for votes before the class-monitor election. (canvas / canvass)
(2) The doctor will ____ an antibiotic. (prescribe / proscribe)
(3) Please be ____ and keep this news private. (discreet / discrete)

20. Choose the right word from the brackets for each sentence:
(1) The data was split into ____ groups. (discreet / discrete)
(2) The board may ____ violent scenes in the film. (censor / censure)
(3) The ____ host agreed to every request. (complacent / complaisant)

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Answer key

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Q	Answer	Working
1	**(c) The captain faced censor for his careless remarks.**	It should be “censure”, not “censor”.
2	**(a) The board may censor violent scenes in the film.**	“censor” is right here.
3	**(d) The doctor will proscribe an antibiotic.**	It should be “prescribe”, not “proscribe”.
4	**(d) The teacher tried to elicit answers from the class.**	“elicit” is right here.
5	**(a) The new law will prescribe the sale of plastic bags.**	It should be “proscribe”, not “prescribe”.
6	**(a) Cheating the poor is immoral.**	“immoral” is right here.
7	**(d) From his silence, we can imply that he agrees.**	It should be “infer”, not “imply”.
8	**(c) The country needs strong economic growth.**	“economic” is right here.
9	**(a) allusion (b) adapt**	—
10	**(a) proceed (b) canvas**	—
11	**(a) respectful (b) imply**	—
12	**(a) ingenious (b) proscribe**	—
13	**(a) respectful (b) amoral**	—
14	**(a) economic (b) immoral**	—
15	**(a) ingenuous (b) immigrate**	—
16	**(a) venal (b) adapt**	—
17	**Sample: The poem makes an allusion to a famous fairy tale. A mirage is an optical illusion.**	Any two sentences that use each word correctly.
18	**Sample: The country needs strong economic growth. This car is economical on fuel.**	Any two sentences that use each word correctly.
19	**(1) canvass (2) prescribe (3) discreet**	—
20	**(1) discrete (2) censor (3) complaisant**	—

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