

# Text Completion Sample Questions

For each blank select one entry from the corresponding column of choices.  
 Fill all blanks in the way that best completes the text.

- It is refreshing to read a book about our planet by an author who does not allow facts to be (i)\_\_\_\_\_ by politics: well aware of the political disputes about the effects of human activities on climate and biodiversity, this author does not permit them to (ii)\_\_\_\_\_ his comprehensive description of what we know about our biosphere. He emphasizes the enormous gaps in our knowledge, the sparseness of our observations, and the (iii)\_\_\_\_\_, calling attention to the many aspects of planetary evolution that must be better understood before we can accurately diagnose the condition of our planet.

Sample Question 1 Answers.

Blank (i)	Blank (ii)	Blank (iii)
(A) overshadowed	(D) enhance	(G) plausibility of our hypotheses
(B) invalidated	(E) obscure	(H) certainty of our entitlement
(C) illuminated	(F) underscore	(I) superficiality of our theories

- Explanation*
- The overall tone of the passage is clearly complimentary. To understand what the author of the book is being complimented on, it is useful to focus on the second blank. Here, we must determine what word would indicate something that the author is praised for not permitting. The only answer choice that fits the case is "obscure," since enhancing and underscoring are generally good things to do, not things one should refrain from doing. Choosing "obscure" clarifies the choice for the first blank; the only choice that fits well with "obscure" is "overshadowed." Notice that trying to fill blank (i) without filling blank (ii) first is hard — each choice has at least some initial plausibility. Since the third blank requires a phrase that matches "enormous gaps" and "sparseness of our observations," the best choice is "superficiality of our theories."
- Thus the correct answer is Choice A (overshadowed), Choice E (obscure) and Choice I (superficiality of our theories).**
- Vain and prone to violence, Caravaggio could not handle success: the more his (i)\_\_\_\_\_ as an artist increased, the more (ii)\_\_\_\_\_ his life became.

Sample Question 3 Answers.

Blank (i)	Blank (ii)
(A) temperance	(D) tumultuous
(B) notoriety	(E) providential
(C) eminence	(F) dispassionate

- Explanation*

7. In this sentence, what follows the colon must explain or spell out what precedes it. So, roughly, what the second part must say is that as Caravaggio became more successful, his life got more out of control. When one looks for words to fill the blanks, it becomes clear that "tumultuous" is the best fit for blank (ii), since neither of the other choices suggests being out of control. And for blank (i), the best choice is "eminence," since to increase in eminence is a consequence of becoming more successful. It is true that Caravaggio might also increase in notoriety, but an increase in notoriety as an artist is not as clear a sign of success as an increase in eminence.
8. **Thus the correct answer is Choice C (eminence) and Choice D (tumultuous).**
9. In parts of the Arctic, the land grades into the landfast ice so \_\_\_\_\_ that you can walk off the coast and not know you are over the hidden sea.

Sample Question 3

Answers.

- (A) permanently
- (B) imperceptibly
- (C) irregularly
- (D) precariously
- (E) slightly

10. *Explanation*

11. The word that fills the blank has to characterize how the land grades into the ice in a way that explains how you can walk off the coast and over the sea without knowing it. The word that does that is "imperceptibly"; if the land grades imperceptibly into the ice, you might well not know that you had left the land. Describing the shift from land to ice as permanent, irregular or precarious would not help to explain how you would fail to know, while describing it as slight would suggest that there was hardly any grading from one to the other, the opposite of what is needed.
12. **Thus the correct answer is Choice B (imperceptibly).**