

Gellerisms

on the SAT Sentence Completions

- A “single-blank” sentence completion is mostly a test of vocabulary; the definition of the word that you should choose as your answer will be stated almost directly in the sentence.
- A “two-blank” sentence completion is a test not only of vocabulary but also of critical reading and grammar skills. You must be able to identify the subject of the sentence, the idea being expressed and know how the parts of the sentence are related grammatically. Understanding modification and distinguishing among adjectives, prepositional phrases, appositives, participles and relative clauses can lead to correct solutions. A modifier makes a noun more specific, and several of them can make a sentence completion question more complex.
- Sometimes, while trying to solve a “two-blank” sentence completion, you may want to eliminate some of the second-column answer choices first.
- Always draw a line through the entire answer choice when you eliminate it.
- Never choose a “neutral-in-meaning” word when you are looking for a “positive-in-meaning” or a “negative-in-meaning” word. Go really, really positive or really, really negative.
- Be a detective!
 - Use punctuation clues. A semi-colon or colon signals that the ideas expressed to the right and to the left of the punctuation mark are similar. A comma can signal an appositive phrase that describes the noun following or preceding it.
 - Use strong word clues. Adjectives, verbs and occasionally adverbs and nouns signal the tone or main idea of a sentence.
 - Use connector clues. A conjunction such as *and*, *for*, *so*, *because*, etc., signals similar or cause and effect ideas to the right and to the left of the conjunction. Another conjunction such as *but*, *although*, *however*, *despite*, *nevertheless*, etc., signals contrasting ideas to the right and to the left of the conjunction.

