

CUET 2026 May 18 Shift 1 English

Question Paper (Memory-Based) With Solutions PDF

Conducted by National Testing Agency (NTA)



General Instructions

- (i) The examination will be conducted in Computer-Based Test (CBT) mode.
- (ii) Each question carries +5 marks for correct answer and -1 mark for wrong answer.
- (iii) The total number of questions are 50.
- (iv) Duration of the exam is 1 hour (60 minutes).

1. Choose the word that is closest in meaning to “obfuscate”.

- (a) Clarify
- (b) Confuse
- (c) Simplify
- (d) Reveal

Correct Answer: (b) Confuse

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Concept:

Vocabulary questions require analyzing the root meaning, context, and usage of a word to determine its nearest synonym among the given choices.

Step 2: Key Formula or Approach:

Identify the definition of the target word: "Obfuscate" means to render obscure, unclear, or unintelligible.

Step 3: Detailed Explanation:

Obfuscate means to deliberately make something difficult to understand or perceive (e.g.,

"The writer used complex jargon to obfuscate his true meaning"). Therefore, Confuse is the closest synonym. **Clarify**, **Simplify**, and **Reveal** are all antonyms of obfuscate, as they deal with making things clearer or easier to see.

Step 4: Final Answer:

The word closest in meaning to "obfuscate" is Confuse.

Quick Tip: Think of the "ob-" prefix in obfuscate as related to words like obscure or obstruct—all of which involve blocking or clouding view or understanding.

2. Identify the correctly spelt word.

- (a) Acquaintence
- (b) Acquaintance
- (c) Aqcquaintance
- (d) Acquaintance

Correct Answer: (b) Acquaintance

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Concept:

Spelling tests assess knowledge of phonetic rules, silent letters, and conventional letter groupings in English vocabulary.

Step 2: Key Formula or Approach:

Break down the word into its syllables or root construction: *ac + quaint + ance*.

Step 3: Detailed Explanation:

The root component is "quaint" (familiar or unusual), preceded by the prefix combination "ac-". The suffix used here is -ance (denoting a state or condition), not "-ence". Combining these elements systematically yields Acquaintance (a person one knows slightly, but who is not a close friend).

Step 4: Final Answer:

The correctly spelt word is Acquaintance.

Quick Tip: Remember that an acquaintance is someone you are bound to check ain't a stranger. Focus on the word "quaint" hidden inside it!

3. Choose the correct idiom to complete the sentence:

“When the manager resigned suddenly, the company employees were left _____.”

- (a) in hot water
- (b) under the weather
- (c) high and dry
- (d) at sixes and sevens

Correct Answer: (c) high and dry

Solution:**Step 1: Understanding the Concept:**

Idioms are expressions whose figurative meanings cannot be understood directly from the literal definitions of individual words. The correct option must logically match the contextual narrative of the sentence.

Step 2: Key Formula or Approach:

Analyze the meaning of each idiom in relation to a sudden abandonment or crisis:

- *In hot water:* In trouble or facing punishment.
- *Under the weather:* Feeling sick or unwell.
- *High and dry:* Left stranded, helpless, or abandoned without resources.
- *At sixes and sevens:* In a state of total confusion or disarray.

Step 3: Detailed Explanation:

The sentence states that a manager resigned suddenly, leaving the employees without leadership or support to handle the ongoing operations. While "at sixes and sevens" (confused)

is a close option, the phrase high and dry specifically emphasizes being abandoned in a difficult, vulnerable, and helpless situation due to someone else's sudden actions.

Step 4: Final Answer:

The most appropriate idiom to complete the sentence is high and dry.

Quick Tip: The phrase high and dry originally described a ship stuck out of water on land, unable to move or save itself—perfect for describing a team stranded without a boss!

4. Select the sentence with the correct grammatical usage.

- (a) Neither of the boys were ready for the exam.
- (b) Neither of the boys was ready for the exam.
- (c) Neither of the boys are ready for the exam.
- (d) Neither of the boys have been ready for the exam.

Correct Answer: (b) Neither of the boys was ready for the exam.

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Concept:

This question deals with subject-verb agreement rules, specifically when using distributive pronouns like "neither", "either", or "each".

Step 2: Key Formula or Approach:

The pronoun "neither" means "not one nor the other of two." It is inherently singular in formal grammar and must be paired with a singular verb.

Step 3: Detailed Explanation:

In the sentence structure "Neither of the [plural noun]", the actual subject is Neither, not the plural noun that follows the preposition "of" (boys).

- Because "Neither" is singular, it requires the singular past-tense verb was.
- Options (a), (c), and (d) use plural verbs ("were", "are", "have been"), creating an error in subject-verb agreement.

Step 4: Final Answer:

The grammatically correct sentence is: "Neither of the boys was ready for the exam."

Quick Tip: To avoid confusion, mentally cross out the phrase starting with "of". Read it as: "Neither [was] ready for the exam." It makes the correct singular verb choice obvious!

5. Read the sentence and identify the figure of speech used:

"The wind whispered through the trees."

- (a) Hyperbole
- (b) Personification
- (c) Irony
- (d) Metaphor

Correct Answer: (b) Personification

Solution:**Step 1: Understanding the Concept:**

Figures of speech are literary devices used to convey meanings beyond the literal interpretation of words, making descriptions more vivid or imaginative.

Step 2: Key Formula or Approach:

Identify the action being performed and determine if it is naturally possible for the subject.

Step 3: Detailed Explanation:

The subject is "the wind" (a non-human, natural element). The action is "whispered" (a human behavior that requires vocal cords, speech, and intent). When human traits, emotions, or actions are assigned to non-human things or abstract ideas, the figure of speech is called Personification. Hyperbole is extreme exaggeration, a Metaphor is a direct hidden comparison, and Irony is a contrast between expectation and reality—none of which fit here.

Step 4: Final Answer:

The figure of speech used in the sentence is Personification.

Quick Tip: Look closely at the word itself: Personification. It simply means making a non-human thing act like a person!

6. Choose the option that best paraphrases the sentence:

“Technological advancement has significantly altered human interaction.”

- (a) Technology has reduced the need for communication entirely.
- (b) Human interaction is unaffected by modern inventions.
- (c) Advances in technology have greatly changed the way people interact.
- (d) Technology only affects professional communication.

Correct Answer: (c) Advances in technology have greatly changed the way people interact.

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Concept:

Paraphrasing means rewriting a statement using different words while keeping the exact same meaning, tone, and scope as the original message.

Step 2: Key Formula or Approach:

Match key synonyms and retain core logical relations:

- "Technological advancement" → "Advances in technology"
- "Significantly altered" → "Greatly changed"
- "Human interaction" → "The way people interact"

Step 3: Detailed Explanation:

Option (a) changes the scope by making an extreme claim ("reduced the need... entirely"). Option (b) states the exact opposite of the original sentence. Option (c) perfectly retains the meaning by substituting words with accurate synonyms without adding or subtracting constraints. Option (d) introduces a limitation ("only affects professional") that was not present in the broad original text.

Step 4: Final Answer:

The option that best paraphrases the sentence is (c).

Quick Tip: A good paraphrase never introduces extreme absolute words like entirely, only, always, or never unless they were already present in the original sentence.

7. Fill in the blank with the correct option:

“If she _____ harder, she would have succeeded.”

- (a) studies
- (b) studied
- (c) had studied
- (d) has studied

Correct Answer: (c) had studied

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Concept:

This sentence belongs to the Third Conditional category. Third conditional sentences are used to express hypothetical situations in the past—events that did not happen, along with their imaginary results.

Step 2: Key Formula or Approach:

The standard structural formula for a Third Conditional sentence is:

If + Past Perfect Clause (had + V_3), ... would have + Past Participle (V_3)

Step 3: Detailed Explanation:

The result clause is explicitly given as "...she **would have succeeded**" (would have + V_3). Following the conditional rule, the conditional "if" clause must take a verb phrase in the past perfect tense. Among the given choices, only had studied satisfies the past perfect requirement (had + V_3). Choosing "studies" (present), "studied" (simple past), or "has studied" (present perfect) breaks the structural logic of this conditional structure.

Step 4: Final Answer:

The complete grammatically correct sentence is: "If she had studied harder, she would have succeeded."

Quick Tip: Think of it as a past balancing scale: If you spot "would have" on one side of the sentence, you almost always need "had" on the other side!

8. Read the following passage and answer the question:

Climate change is one of the most pressing challenges of the modern era. Scientists warn that rising temperatures may lead to severe environmental consequences, including floods, droughts, and biodiversity loss. Governments across the world are attempting to develop sustainable solutions, but implementation remains uneven.

What is the central idea of the passage?

- (a) Governments have solved climate change completely.
- (b) Climate change poses serious global challenges requiring action.
- (c) Biodiversity loss is unrelated to climate change.
- (d) Scientists disagree about global warming.

Correct Answer: (b) Climate change poses serious global challenges requiring action.

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Concept:

Finding the central idea requires capturing the broad theme that unifies every sentence in the passage rather than focusing on a single detail or an over-generalized claim.

Step 2: Key Formula or Approach:

Analyze the logical development of the short text:

- Sentence 1 establishes the main topic: "pressing challenges."
- Sentence 2 provides details on risks: "severe environmental consequences."
- Sentence 3 outlines the ongoing response: "governments attempting solutions."

Step 3: Detailed Explanation:

Option (a) is completely false because the text notes that implementation "remains uneven."

Option (b) accurately sums up the primary points: it points out the problems (challenges) and acknowledges the ongoing effort to fix them (action). Option (c) is explicitly contradicted by the text, which lists biodiversity loss as a consequence of climate change. Option (d) is incorrect because the passage says "scientists warn" collectively, showing agreement rather than conflict.

Step 4: Final Answer:

The central idea of the passage is that climate change poses serious global challenges requiring action.

Quick Tip: The central idea is usually stated clearly right in the very first sentence of short informational passages. Use it as your anchor!

9. Identify the figure of speech used in the line:

"Life is a journey filled with unexpected turns."

- (a) Simile
- (b) Oxymoron
- (c) Metaphor
- (d) Alliteration

Correct Answer: (c) Metaphor

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Concept:

Figures of speech identify comparisons made between two completely different concepts to highlight a shared characteristic.

Step 2: Key Formula or Approach:

Look closely at how the comparison is set up:

- If it says *A* is like or as *B*, it is a Simile.
- If it says *A* is *B* directly, it is a Metaphor.

Step 3: Detailed Explanation:

The statement directly asserts that "Life is a journey." It does not use comparative words like "like" or "as" to soften the imagery. By equating life directly to a journey with twists and turns, it functions as a Metaphor, carrying the qualities of travel and exploration over to human existence.

Step 4: Final Answer:

The figure of speech used is a Metaphor.

Quick Tip: "Life is like a box of chocolates" is a simile. "Life is a highway" is a metaphor. It all comes down to dropping the word "like"!

10. Choose the word opposite in meaning to "ephemeral."

- (a) Temporary
- (b) Fleeting
- (c) Permanent
- (d) Fragile

Correct Answer: (c) Permanent

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Concept:

Antonym questions require identifying the word that carries the inverse or opposite logical meaning of the given vocabulary term.

Step 2: Key Formula or Approach:

Define the core term: "Ephemeral" is derived from Greek roots meaning "lasting only a day." It describes something short-lived or transient.

Step 3: Detailed Explanation:

Temporary and Fleeting mean lasting a very short time, making them synonyms of ephemeral. Fragile means easily broken, which is a different concept entirely. Permanent means lasting or intended to last indefinitely without change, which is the exact polar opposite of a short-lived,

transient state.

Step 4: Final Answer:

The word opposite in meaning to “ephemeral” is Permanent.

Quick Tip: Think of morning dew or a shooting star—they are classic examples of ephemeral things. Their opposite is something built to last forever, like a mountain range (permanent).