

CUET 2026 English May 25 Shift 1

Question Paper (Memory-Based) with Solutions

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 which is closest in meaning to *salubrious*.

- (A) Harmful
- (B) Healthy
- (C) Expensive
- (D) Bitter

Correct Answer: (B) Healthy

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

The objective of this question is to identify the synonym or the word that is closest in meaning to the given vocabulary word, "salubrious".

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

- **Meaning of Salubrious:** The word "salubrious" is an adjective used to describe

something that is favorable to or promoting health or well-being.

- **Etymology:** It originates from the Latin word "salubris", which comes from "salus", meaning health, safety, or welfare.
- **Analysis of Option (A) - Harmful:** This word refers to something causing or likely to cause damage, injury, or harm. This is the opposite of the target word.
- **Analysis of Option (B) - Healthy:** This term means beneficial to physical health or promoting physical well-being. This corresponds directly to the definition of salubrious, making it the correct option.
- **Analysis of Option (C) - Expensive:** This term refers to something costing a high price or a large sum of money. It has no relevance to health or well-being.
- **Analysis of Option (D) - Bitter:** This term describes a sharp, pungent, or unpleasant taste, or a feeling of deep anger and resentment. It is semantically distant from salubrious.
- **Usage in Context:** One might refer to a "salubrious climate" to describe a pleasant, health-giving environment that helps a patient recover from an illness.

Step 3: Final Answer:

Therefore, the word closest in meaning to "salubrious" is "Healthy", which corresponds to option (B).

Quick Tip: Familiarizing yourself with Latin and Greek roots can boost your performance in vocabulary sections.

The root "sal-" or "salu-" consistently relates to health, safety, or wellness, as seen in words like salutary, salute, and salvage.

If you spot this root in an unfamiliar word, look for options that focus on health or positive well-being.

2. Select the antonym of the word *expedite*.

- (A) Delay
- (B) Complete
- (C) Improve
- (D) Accelerate

Correct Answer: (A) Delay

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

The question requires us to find the antonym, which is the word opposite in meaning, to the vocabulary word "expedite".

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

- **Meaning of Expedite:** To "expedite" is a verb that means to make an action or process happen sooner or be accomplished more quickly.
- **Etymology:** It is derived from the Latin word "expeditus", which is the past participle of "expedire", meaning to extricate, set free, or literally "to free the feet" from shackles.
- **Analysis of Option (A) - Delay:** To "delay" means to make someone or something late, slow, or to postpone an action. This is the direct opposite of speeding up a process,

making it the correct antonym.

- **Analysis of Option (B) - Complete:** To "complete" means to finish making or doing something. While expediting can help complete a task faster, completion itself is not the antonym of expedition.
- **Analysis of Option (C) - Improve:** To "improve" means to make or become better in quality or status. It refers to quality enhancement rather than speed.
- **Analysis of Option (D) - Accelerate:** To "accelerate" means to undergo a rapid increase in speed or to hasten a process. This is a synonym of expedite, not an antonym.
- **Contextual Usage:** A company might pay extra money to "expedite" shipping so that a package arrives in one day instead of one week.

Step 3: Final Answer:

Consequently, the word opposite in meaning to "expedite" is "Delay", which corresponds to option (A).

Quick Tip: When looking for antonyms, be careful not to accidentally select a synonym, as synonyms are often included as distractors.

In this question, "accelerate" is a strong synonym designed to test your focus.

Always read all four choices carefully before making your final selection.

3. Choose the correctly spelt word.

- (A) Orninthology
- (B) Orinthology
- (C) Ornithology

(D) Ornethology

Correct Answer: (C) Ornithology

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

The objective of this question is to identify the single correctly spelled word from the four given spelling variations.

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

- **Meaning of Ornithology:** "Ornithology" is a noun that refers to the scientific branch of zoology that focuses on the study of birds.
- **Etymological Roots:** The word comes from the Greek "ornithos", which means bird, and the suffix "-logia", which means the study of a subject. Combining these yields "ornith-o-logy".
- **Analysis of Option (A) - Orninthology:** This spelling is incorrect because it introduces an extra, silent letter "n" in the second syllable, creating "orninth-", which is not a valid root.
- **Analysis of Option (B) - Orinthology:** This spelling is incorrect because it omits the first "n" entirely, leading to "orinth-", which fails to match the proper pronunciation and spelling.
- **Analysis of Option (C) - Ornithology:** This is the exact correct spelling of the word, adhering perfectly to its classical Greek origins of "ornis" or "ornitho-".
- **Analysis of Option (D) - Ornethology:** This spelling is incorrect because it replaces the vowel "i" in the third syllable with an "e", creating "-neth-", which is grammatically

wrong.

- **Significance of Spelling:** Spelling errors in academic words often occur around transition vowels or repeated consonants, so understanding the base root helps eliminate errors.

Step 3: Final Answer:

The correctly spelled word is "Ornithology", which corresponds to option (C).

Quick Tip: For scientific studies and academic fields, breaking the word into its prefix, root, and suffix is highly effective.

The suffix "-ology" is standard for fields of study, so your main focus should be on the correct form of the root.

Knowing that "ornith-" is the standard scientific prefix for birds immediately leads to the correct spelling.

4. The idiom *axe to grind* means:

- (A) To sharpen a weapon
- (B) To have a selfish motive
- (C) To work very hard
- (D) To end a friendship

Correct Answer: (B) To have a selfish motive

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

The question requires us to determine the idiomatic meaning of the common English phrase "an axe to grind".

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

- **Idiomatic Definition:** The phrase "to have an axe to grind" means to have a strong personal opinion or a selfish, hidden motive for doing something.
- **Origin of the Idiom:** The idiom is historical, commonly associated with an essay written by Charles Miner in 1810 or sometimes attributed to Benjamin Franklin.
- **The Origin Story:** In the story, a man flatters a young boy into turning a heavy grindstone so that the man can sharpen his axe. Once the axe is sharp, the man walks away without thanking the boy. This represents using others for one's own private motives.
- **Analysis of Option (A) - To sharpen a weapon:** This is the literal meaning of grinding an axe, which is incorrect because idioms carry a figurative meaning rather than a literal one.
- **Analysis of Option (B) - To have a selfish motive:** This matches the figurative meaning of having a private interest or hidden agenda to serve. Therefore, it is correct.
- **Analysis of Option (C) - To work very hard:** While turning a grindstone is hard work, this is not the figurative meaning of the idiom.
- **Analysis of Option (D) - To end a friendship:** This is unrelated to the concept of private motives or axes, making it incorrect.

Step 3: Final Answer:

The idiomatic meaning of "axe to grind" is "To have a selfish motive", corresponding to option (B).

Quick Tip: Idioms in English examinations almost never mean what they literally say.

If you see an option that describes the physical, literal action of the words in the idiom, such as "sharpening a weapon", you can safely eliminate it.

Look for figurative meanings that involve human behavior, motives, or relationships.

5. Choose the meaning of the idiom *run down*.

- (A) To criticize someone
- (B) To move upward
- (C) To decorate something
- (D) To discover a secret

Correct Answer: (A) To criticize someone

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

The task is to identify the correct idiomatic meaning of the phrasal verb or idiom "run down" from the provided options.

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

- **Idiomatic Definition:** The phrasal verb "run down" has multiple standard meanings. One of its main figurative meanings is to criticize, disparage, or speak poorly of someone in an unfair or persistent manner.
- **Other Definitions:** It can also mean to lose power or stop working (like a battery), to be in poor physical condition (exhausted), or to hit someone with a vehicle.
- **Analysis of Option (A) - To criticize someone:** This corresponds to the common idiomatic usage where one "runs someone down" to lower their reputation. It is the

correct option here.

- **Analysis of Option (B) - To move upward:** This is the literal opposite of the word "down" and is not an idiomatic meaning of "run down".
- **Analysis of Option (C) - To decorate something:** This is completely unrelated to any known definition of "run down".
- **Analysis of Option (D) - To discover a secret:** This might be confused with other phrasal verbs like "run to ground" or "track down", but it does not represent "run down".
- **Example Sentence:** "It is not professional to constantly run down your former employer during job interviews."

Step 3: Final Answer:

The correct meaning of the idiom "run down" is "To criticize someone", which is represented by option (A).

Quick Tip: Phrasal verbs can have multiple meanings depending on context.

When preparing for competitive exams, study the multiple definitions of common phrasal verbs containing verbs like run, put, look, and take.

In this question, looking for the most common figurative meaning helps identify "to criticize someone" as the correct choice.

6. Choose the word opposite in meaning to *impede*.

- (A) Obstruct
- (B) Delay
- (C) Assist

(D) Prevent

Correct Answer: (C) Assist

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

The question asks us to identify the word that is opposite in meaning (antonym) to the word "impede".

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

- **Meaning of Impede:** To "impede" means to delay, hinder, or obstruct someone or something by placing obstacles in their path.
- **Etymology:** It comes from the Latin verb "impedire", which literally means to "shackle the feet", derived from "in-" (into) and "pes" (foot).
- **Analysis of Option (A) - Obstruct:** To "obstruct" means to block or get in the way of progress. This is a synonym of impede, not an antonym.
- **Analysis of Option (B) - Delay:** To "delay" means to make something slow or late. This is a common consequence of impeding, making it a closely related synonym.
- **Analysis of Option (C) - Assist:** To "assist" means to help, facilitate, or support someone or something to make progress easier. This is the direct opposite of impeding, making it the correct antonym.
- **Analysis of Option (D) - Prevent:** To "prevent" means to stop something from happening or to hinder completely. This is a synonym of impede.

- **Example Sentence:** "The heavy snow storm did not impede the rescue efforts, as local volunteers arrived to assist the emergency crews."

Step 3: Final Answer:

Thus, the word opposite in meaning to "impede" is "Assist", which matches option (C).

Quick Tip: Understanding prefixes can help you quickly identify the orientation of a word.

The prefix "im-" or "in-" often carries a negative or restrictive meaning, while the root "ped-" refers to feet.

Conversely, words that mean to help often have positive connotations.

This contrast makes it easier to spot "assist" as the correct opposing word.

7. Select the correct indirect narration of the following sentence:

"Beware, there is danger!" the commander said to the soldiers.

- (A) The commander warned the soldiers that there was danger.
- (B) The commander told the soldiers beware of danger.
- (C) The commander informed the soldiers that there is danger.
- (D) The commander exclaimed the soldiers about danger.

Correct Answer: (A) The commander warned the soldiers that there was danger.

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

The objective is to accurately convert the direct speech sentence, which expresses an imperative warning, into its indirect speech counterpart.

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

- **Analysis of the Direct Sentence:** The direct sentence is: "“Beware, there is danger!” the commander said to the soldiers."
- **Identifying the Reporting Verb:** The phrase "Beware" signifies an explicit warning. Therefore, the reporting verb "said to" should be converted to "warned" to reflect this tone accurately in indirect speech.
- **Tense Change Rules:** In indirect narration, when the reporting verb is in the past tense ("said"), the verbs in the reported speech must undergo a backshift in tense. Therefore, the simple present "is" in "there is danger" must change to the simple past "was".
- **Conjunction Usage:** The conjunction "that" is appropriate to connect the reporting clause with the reported statement in declarative conversions of exclamations or warnings.
- **Analysis of Option (A):** "The commander warned the soldiers that there was danger." This sentence correctly uses "warned", applies the conjunction "that", and properly changes the tense from "is" to "was". This is correct.
- **Analysis of Option (B):** "The commander told the soldiers beware of danger." This is grammatically incorrect and does not follow the standard rules of indirect speech formatting.
- **Analysis of Option (C):** "The commander informed the soldiers that there is danger." This sentence is incorrect because it fails to change the tense from "is" to "was".
- **Analysis of Option (D):** "The commander exclaimed the soldiers about danger." This is grammatically awkward and incorrect because "exclaimed" is not transitively followed by direct objects in this manner.

Step 3: Final Answer:

The correct indirect narration is Option (A), "The commander warned the soldiers that there was danger."

Quick Tip: When converting direct speech to indirect speech, always check for two key modifications: the reporting verb and the tense change.

An imperative warning like "Beware" should lead you directly to reporting verbs like "warned".

Eliminating options that do not apply past tense backshifting (changing "is" to "was") will quickly narrow down the choices.

8. Choose the correct meaning of the word *philately*.

- (A) Study of coins
- (B) Collection of stamps
- (C) Study of birds
- (D) Collection of paintings

Correct Answer: (B) Collection of stamps

Solution:**Step 1: Understanding the Question:**

The goal of this question is to identify the precise definition of the noun "philately" from the given list of options.

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

- **Definition of Philately:** "Philately" is defined as the collection, study, and appreciation of postage stamps and related postal history materials.

- **Etymology:** The term was coined in 1864 by the French stamp collector Georges Herpin. It is derived from the Greek words "philos" (meaning loving or fond of) and "ateleia" (meaning exemption from tax or duty, which refers to the postage stamp indicating prepaying of fees).
- **Analysis of Option (A) - Study of coins:** The scientific study or collection of coins, tokens, and paper money is called "numismatics", making this option incorrect.
- **Analysis of Option (B) - Collection of stamps:** This is the exact definition of philately, making it the correct option.
- **Analysis of Option (C) - Study of birds:** The scientific study of birds is called "ornithology", so this option is incorrect.
- **Analysis of Option (D) - Collection of paintings:** There is no single classical term like philately for this, but it is typically referred to as art collecting or curation.
- **Contextual Relevance:** Philatelists are people who collect stamps, often valuing them for historical, geographical, and artistic significance.

Step 3: Final Answer:

The correct meaning of "philately" is "Collection of stamps", which is option (B).

Quick Tip: In competitive English exams, questions on "one-word substitutions" or "specialized terms" are very common.

Make a list of terms ending in "-ology" (the study of) and "-y" or "-ics" relating to hobbies or collections. Memorizing these terms systematically can help you secure easy marks.

9. Choose the correct meaning of the word *numismatics*.

- (A) Study of birds
- (B) Collection of stamps
- (C) Study or collection of coins
- (D) Study of plants

Correct Answer: (C) Study or collection of coins

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

The objective of this question is to find the correct meaning of the term "numismatics" from the given choices.

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

- **Definition of Numismatics:** "Numismatics" refers to the scientific study or collection of currency, which includes coins, paper money, tokens, medals, and related objects.
- **Etymology:** It is derived from the Latin word "numismatis", which comes from the Greek "nomisma", meaning coin, custom, or usage.
- **Analysis of Option (A) - Study of birds:** This is known as "ornithology", so it is incorrect.
- **Analysis of Option (B) - Collection of stamps:** This is known as "philately", which was the focus of the previous question, making it incorrect.
- **Analysis of Option (C) - Study or collection of coins:** This perfectly matches the definition of numismatics, making it the correct choice.

- **Analysis of Option (D) - Study of plants:** The scientific study of plants is "botany", which is incorrect here.
- **Practical Application:** Numismatists play an important role in historical research, as studying old coins helps determine the economic state, trade routes, and metallurgy of ancient civilizations.

Step 3: Final Answer:

The correct meaning of "numismatics" is "Study or collection of coins", corresponding to option (C).

Quick Tip: Notice how questions 8 and 9 are closely related.

Often, options in one question can provide hints or answers for other questions in the same paper.

Keeping track of terms like philately and numismatics helps build a strong vocabulary for competitive examinations.

10. Choose the word closest in meaning to *judicial*.

- (A) Legal
- (B) Musical
- (C) Medical
- (D) Historical

Correct Answer: (A) Legal

Solution:

Step 1: Understanding the Question:

The goal is to find the word closest in meaning (synonym) to "judicial" from the given options.

Step 2: Detailed Explanation:

- **Meaning of Judicial:** "Judicial" is an adjective that relates to a court of law, the administration of justice, or the office of a judge.
- **Etymology:** It originates from the Latin "judicialis", which comes from "judicium" (judgment) and "judex" (judge).
- **Analysis of Option (A) - Legal:** "Legal" relates to the law, its administration, or the court system. Because the judicial branch administers the law, "judicial" is highly related to "legal". Among the options, it is the closest synonym.
- **Analysis of Option (B) - Musical:** This relates to music, performance, or sound, which is entirely unrelated to the court system.
- **Analysis of Option (C) - Medical:** This relates to the science or practice of medicine and healing, which has no connection to the judiciary.
- **Analysis of Option (D) - Historical:** This relates to history or past events, which is not synonymous with judicial matters.
- **Contextual Usage:** A "judicial review" is a legal process in which a court reviews the lawfulness of a decision or action made by a public body.

Step 3: Final Answer:

The word closest in meaning to "judicial" is "Legal", corresponding to option (A).

Quick Tip: Always look for the most logical connection when choosing synonyms.

The root "jud-" always refers to law, judgment, or justice, as seen in words like judge, judgment, and judicious.

Connecting the root "jud-" to "law" leads you directly to the correct option "Legal".

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