ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Essential Words for the TOEFL Lesson 24 Vocabulary Test

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Explanations

1. **Choose the synonym.**
discernible
✓ **B) detectable**
Discernible means able to be noticed or seen, so its synonym is **detectable**: **a discernible change in temperature**. Not **negligent**, which means careless.

2. average
✓ **D) mediocre**
Average can mean ordinary, not especially good. **Mediocre** has this meaning: **a mediocre performance**. Not **approximate**, which means close but not exact, as in an approximate number.

3. originate
✓ **A) stem from**
To **originate** means to begin or come from a particular source. **Stem from** means the same: **The problem stems from a lack of funding.** Not **disperse**, which means to spread out.

4. potent
✓ **A) powerful**
Potent means strong or having great effect: **a potent medicine**. Its synonym is **powerful**. Not **durable**, which means long-lasting.

5. affordable
✓ **C) economical**
Affordable means not expensive, so people can pay for it. **Economical** means cheap to buy or use: **an economical car**. Not **proportional**, which means in the correct size or amount compared with something else.

6. similar
✓ **C) parallel**
Parallel can mean very similar or happening in the same way: **parallel developments in two countries**. So it is a synonym of **similar**. **Varied** means the opposite.

7. insufficient
✓ **A) inadequate**
Insufficient means not enough. **Inadequate** has the same meaning: **inadequate supplies of food**. Not **abysmal**, which means extremely bad, not "not enough".

8. negligible
✓ **C) insignificant**
Negligible means so small that it is not important. Its synonym is **insignificant**: **The cost was negligible.** **Exceptional** means the opposite, unusually great.

9. thriving
✓ **A) flourishing**
Thriving means growing and developing very well. **Flourishing** has the same meaning: **a flourishing business**. **Vanishing** means disappearing, the opposite idea.

10. monotonous
✓ **D) tedious**
Monotonous means always the same and therefore boring. **Tedious** also means boring and long: **a tedious job**. Not **ambiguous**, which means having more than one possible meaning.

11. The Ceratosaurus, a genus of large carnivorous dinosaurs found as fossils in Late Jurassic rocks of North America, was similar to, and possibly closely related to, the Allosaurus. Ceratosaurus weighed up to 2 tons. This dinosaur was **somewhat** smaller than Allosaurus. It had a distinctive horn on its snout, a row of bony plates down the middle of its back, and four clawed fingers rather than three.

The word **somewhat** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✓ **C) slightly**
Somewhat means to a small degree, a little. The passage says Ceratosaurus was only a little smaller than Allosaurus, so the answer is **slightly**. Not **peculiarly**, which means strangely.

12. The countries of Scandinavia were influenced by the spirit of improvement prevalent throughout Europe during the eighteenth century, but showed less advanced agriculture than others. Danish farmers were somewhat slowed in using new methods because of political restrictions. At the end of the nineteenth century, however, these political restrictions lessened, and the agriculture industry **reciprocated** by developing solid advances in farming techniques.

The word **reciprocated** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✓ **D) responded**
To **reciprocate** means to respond to an action with a similar or matching action. When the restrictions were lessened, the agriculture industry **responded** by developing better farming techniques. Not **emulated**, which means copied someone else.

13. Tourists throng to Baltimore's Inner Harbor year-round. The Inner Harbor was built in an area that was once a **contaminated** industrial port. This area underwent rapid development in the 1980s. It is now a waterside array of high-fashion stores, new hotels, outdoor performances, moving boats, docked ships, and locales for eating and drinking.

The word **contaminated** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **B) polluted**
Contaminated means made dirty or harmful by chemicals or waste. The old industrial port was **polluted**. Not **dangerous**: contamination can make a place dangerous, but the word itself means polluted.

14. Before 1999, the Northwest Territories were Canada's most sparsely settled area. Most settlements consisted of only a few hundred people. About two-thirds of Canada's Inuit lived there, **scattered** throughout the Arctic sector. Most Europeans who lived in this territory lived in the Mackenzie Valley.

The word **scattered** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **D) distributed**
Scattered means spread over a wide area in small groups. The passage describes people living in small settlements across the Arctic, so they were **distributed** over a large area. Not **organized**, which means arranged in a planned way.

15. Plastics are a vast group of synthetic materials whose structures are based on the chemistry of carbon. They are also called polymers because they are made of extremely long chains of carbon atoms. An important characteristic of plastics is that they can be readily molded into finished products by the application of heat. As finished products, one of their well-known properties is **remarkable** resistance to heat.

The word **remarkable** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **C) exceptional**
Remarkable means unusual and worth noticing, usually in a good way. **Remarkable resistance to heat** is unusually great, **exceptional** resistance. Not **practical**, which means useful or sensible.

16. Extensive water storage is common to a class of animals called ruminants. The class includes sheep and cattle, but the class member best known for storing water is the camel. There are two types of camel, the single-humped dromedary and the double-humped Bactrian camel found in the dry steppes of central Asia, where there is **insufficient** water for other animals to survive long-term. The ability of these animals to store water makes them the ideal beasts of burden on long treks across the desert.

The word **insufficient** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **A) inadequate**
Insufficient means not enough. The passage says the steppes do not have enough water for other animals, so the answer is **inadequate**. Not **abysmal**, which means extremely bad.

17. As computer systems improve, databases will play an increasingly important role as sources of information for the general public. As databases become more refined, the need for awareness of a particular database will become more important. Users will need to be able to **discern** how reliable information coming from a database is.

The word **discern** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **C) determine**
To **discern** means to notice, judge or find out something that is not obvious. Users will need to **determine** (decide or find out) how reliable the information is. Not **classify**, which means to put into groups.

18. The late 1970s and 1980s were years of delirious skyscraper construction. This was found in the cities that experienced economic progress, such as Dallas, Houston, and Atlanta in the southern United States, and also Hong Kong, Bangkok, and Singapore. Although New Yorkers, in particular, had reason to complain that the building of **mediocre** skyscrapers was choking Manhattan, a few distinguished profiles were added to the skylines of modern cities.

The word **mediocre** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **A) average**
Mediocre means of only ordinary quality, not very good. The passage contrasts these skyscrapers with the few **distinguished** ones, so they were **average**. **Renowned** means famous, which is the opposite idea.

19. The deserts of the world are distributed in a pair of **parallel** belts lying approximately 25 degrees north and south of the equator. Of these, the world's largest desert is found in the Northern Hemisphere. The Sahara and smaller deserts, forming much of the arid portion of the Middle East, are located in high-pressure regions directly influenced by global circulation of the atmosphere.

The word **parallel** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **D) similar**
Parallel here describes two belts that run in the same way at the same distance north and south of the equator, so they are **similar**. Not **proportional**, which means matching in size or amount.

20. The word **potent** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **B) powerful**
Potent means strong and having great force. **Potent river currents** are **powerful** currents. Not **quick**: the passage uses **swift** for the speed of the rapids, while **potent** describes strength.