ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Essential Words for the TOEFL Lesson 4 Vocabulary Test

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Explanations

1. **Choose the synonym.**
appeal
✓ **C) petition**
To **appeal** means to make a serious or formal request, usually to someone in authority. A **petition** is exactly that kind of request, and **to petition** means to ask formally: **They appealed / petitioned for help.**

2. mundane
✓ **B) ordinary**
Mundane means ordinary, everyday and not exciting: **a mundane job**. **Ordinary** has the same meaning. Not **alterable** (able to be changed), which has nothing to do with being dull or common.

3. instigate
✓ **A) initiate**
To **instigate** means to start something, such as an action, process or investigation. **Initiate** has the same meaning: **The police instigated / initiated an inquiry.** Not **intensify**, which means to make something stronger, not to begin it.

4. elicit
✓ **D) extract**
To **elicit** means to draw out a response, fact or reaction from someone: **The question elicited a long answer. Extract** also means to get or pull something out. Not **withdraw**, which means to take back or remove yourself.

5. abdicate
✓ **A) relinquish**
To **abdicate** means to give up a position, power or responsibility, especially a throne: **The king abdicated. Relinquish** also means to give up or let go of something.

6. misleadingly
✓ **B) deceptively**
Misleadingly means in a way that gives a false idea. **Deceptively** has the same meaning: **The task looked deceptively easy.** Not **truly**, which is close to the opposite.

7. stagnant
✓ **A) still**
Stagnant describes water or air that does not move, and figuratively anything that is not developing. **Still** means not moving. **Flowing** is the opposite.

8. resilient
✓ **D) tenacious**
Resilient describes someone or something that recovers quickly and keeps going after difficulties. **Tenacious** (determined, not giving up easily) is the closest option. Not **vital**, which means very important or full of energy.

9. embody
✓ **A) exemplify**
To **embody** means to be a clear example of an idea or quality: **She embodies kindness. Exemplify** means to be a typical example of something. Not **enrich**, which means to improve the quality of something.

10. vague
✓ **D) ambiguous**
Vague means not clear or exact: **a vague answer**. **Ambiguous** means unclear because it can be understood in more than one way, so it is the closest option.

11. The creation and analysis of optical illusions involve mathematical and geometric principles, such as the proportionality between the areas of similar figures. Optical illusions and their effects are often created through careful physical attributes, such as a nonstandard use of perspective, distorted angles, **deceptive** shading, unusual juxtaposition, and color effects.

The word **deceptive** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✓ **B) misleading**
Deceptive means giving a false impression. The passage says optical illusions trick the eye with **deceptive shading**, that is, shading that makes you see something that is not really there. **Misleading** has the same meaning. Not **ambiguous**, which means open to more than one interpretation, not intended to trick.

12. The Seneca Falls Convention, held in 1848, started the women's suffrage movement in the United States. A "Declaration of Sentiments," which called upon women to organize and to **petition** for their rights, was passed. However, one controversial resolution, calling for the right of women to vote, narrowly passed. The ridicule of that provision of the Declaration caused many backers of women's rights to withdraw their support later on.

The word **petition** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✓ **C) appeal**
To **petition for** something means to make a formal request for it to people in authority. The Declaration called on women to **petition for their rights**, which means to **appeal** (formally ask) for them. Not **demand**, which is stronger and does not mean making a formal request.

13. Space law is concerned with the proper uses of outer space. The most important treaty of space laws was the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. The participants who crafted the treaty concluded that the moon and all other celestial bodies were to be free for exploration and use by all nations. They also **concurred** that the use of weapons of mass destruction was to be forbidden in space.

The word **concurred** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **B) agreed**
To **concur** means to agree or share the same opinion. The passage says the participants **concurred** that weapons of mass destruction should be forbidden, so they **agreed** on this point. Not **assumed**, which means believed without proof.

14. The phrase **become stagnant** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **B) stop moving**
Stagnant means not moving or developing. The passage says lawmaking can **become stagnant** when the states disagree, so the process **stops moving**. Not **be cancelled**, because the process is stuck, not ended.

15. Due to the **astounding** progress of integrated-circuit technology, an enormous number of transistors can be placed onto a single integrated-circuit chip. The first commercially successful microprocessor chip had only about 2,300 transistors, but by the late 2010s, the newest high-end chips had more than 7 billion.

The word **astounding** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **A) astonishing**
Astounding means so surprising or impressive that it is hard to believe. The passage shows this with the huge jump from a few thousand transistors to billions. **Astonishing** has the same meaning. Not **rapid**: the progress was fast, but **astounding** describes how amazing it is, not its speed.

16. Deer populations have grown dramatically in the northeast United States in the last 20 years. Many residents are happy to have deer in their communities, but many others see them as a menace. Deer often wander into traffic, cause automobile accidents, trample lawns, eat flowers, and host insects that carry disease. Therefore, many residents are **determined to** restrict their movements, fence them out, or even eliminate them altogether.

In stating that many people are **determined to** eliminate the deer, the author means that they _____.
✔ **C) insist on reducing them.**
To be **determined to** do something means to have firmly decided to do it and not let anything stop you. The residents see deer as a menace and firmly want to restrict, fence out or eliminate them, so they **insist on reducing them**. Not **want to decide what to do**: they have already decided.

17. The game of chess was not well organized until 1946, when the world chess governing body, FIDE, **asserted** its control over international play. At that time, national chess groups immediately welcomed the chance to join the new federation. However, FIDE's authority has not been universally recognized, and even today there is no general agreement as to the status of the world championship.

The word **asserted** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **D) declared**
To **assert** control means to state or show firmly that you have authority. In 1946, FIDE **declared** its control over international chess. Not **empowered**, which means gave power to someone else.

18. Social anthropologists attempt to illustrate the social emergence and evolution of the human race and to determine differences between human social organization and that of other primates. Despite the fact that all classifications of human societies and cultures are **arbitrary**, they also attempt to note differences between various human societies. In spite of these difficulties, anthropologists have made great advances in the identification and grouping of human civilizations.

The word **arbitrary** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **B) haphazard**
Arbitrary means based on chance or personal choice rather than on a clear system or reason. The passage calls the classifications of societies **arbitrary**, and the next sentence refers to **these difficulties**. **Haphazard** (without order or plan) is closest. Not **vague**, which means unclear rather than without a logical basis.

19. The Monroe Doctrine allowed the United States to intervene in the affairs of Latin American countries in case of foreign invasion. Once the United States was **designated** to act on behalf of its neighbors to the south, episodes of foreign interference decreased until the 1960s, when Cuba wanted the support and economic aid of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The word **designated** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **A) authorized**
To be **designated** to do something means to be officially chosen or given the right to do it. Under the Monroe Doctrine, the United States was **authorized** to act on behalf of its neighbors. Not **determined**, which describes a strong personal decision, not official permission.

20. J. Edgar Hoover was an **astute** professional who served as Director of the FBI for 48 years. Hoover was a resilient and determined government official whose tenure spanned one of the most important eras of modern U.S. history. His policies helped to shape and create what has now become a highly respected modern investigative organization.

The word **astute** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.

✔ C) perceptive

Astute means clever and quick to understand situations and people, especially in order to gain an advantage. **Perceptive** (good at noticing and understanding things) is closest. Not **eminent** or **celebrated**, which mean famous and respected, not intelligent.

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