ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Essential Words for the TOEFL Lesson 5 Vocabulary Test

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Explanations

1. **Choose the synonym.**
incessant
✓ **B) constant**
Incessant means **constant**: never stopping. Example: **the incessant noise of traffic**. Not **unique**, which means one of a kind.

2. obstruct
✓ **D) block**
To **obstruct** something means to **block** it, so it cannot pass or move. Example: **A fallen tree obstructed the road.**

3. intrigue
✓ **A) fascinate**
To **intrigue** someone means to **fascinate** them: to make them very interested and curious. Example: **The mystery intrigued the readers.**

4. well-suited to
✓ **B) compatible with**
If something is **well-suited to** a purpose, it fits it well. In the same way, things that are **compatible with** each other work well together. Not **dedicated to**, which means devoted to or committed to.

5. work out
✓ **C) solve**
The phrasal verb **work out** means **solve**: to find the answer to a problem. Example: **We worked out a solution.** Not **finalize**, which means to complete or finish.

6. convince
✓ **B) persuade**
To **convince** someone means to **persuade** them, so that they believe or do something. Not **assert**, which means to state something firmly.

7. rare
✓ **D) unique**
Rare means not common, seldom found. In this word list, **unique** is used with a similar meaning: unusual or one of a kind. Example: **a rare/unique opportunity**.

8. facilitate
✓ **A) assist**
To **facilitate** something means to make it easier, to **assist** or help it happen. Example: **Computers facilitate communication.**

9. enhance
✓ **B) strengthen**
To **enhance** means to improve or **strengthen** something. Example: **Good lighting enhances a photo.** Not **encourage**, which means to give someone support or confidence.

10. puzzled
✓ **C) baffled**
Puzzled and **baffled** both mean confused, unable to understand something. Example: **She was puzzled/baffled by the strange message.**

11. A newborn chick uses its egg tooth to break the shell of its egg and escape from it at hatching. This toothlike structure is then **shed** since its only use is to help the bird break the eggshell. Some animals, such as lizards and snakes, develop a true tooth that projects outside the row of other teeth. This tooth helps the young hatch.

The word **shed** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✓ **C) discarded**
To **shed** something means to lose it or get rid of it, so it is closest to **discarded**. The passage says the structure is shed **since its only use is to help the bird break the eggshell**. After hatching, it is not needed any more.

12. Imitation gems are usually made of glass or plastics. In recent years, an enormous array of plastics has become available for imitations, but these materials are soft and lack the clarity present in real gemstones. Therefore, they are less satisfactory for the purpose than glass. Flint glasses, containing lead oxide, have higher refractive indices and therefore possess a **brilliance** not found in plastics. This makes flint glasses more suitable than plastic for imitation gems.

The word **brilliance** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✓ **A) radiance**
Brilliance here means bright shining light, so it is closest to **radiance**. The passage links it to the higher refractive indices of flint glass, which make it sparkle. Not **lightness**, which usually means low weight or a pale color.

13. During a shower, meteors appear to spread from a point in the sky, called the radiant. These radiant points give each shower its name. For example, the Perseids shower appears to radiate from the constellation Perseus. During the heaviest showers, 30 to 70 meteors may be seen every hour, but on **unique** occasions in a spectacular display, that number may be visible every second.

The word **unique** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **D) rare**
Here **unique** means very unusual, happening seldom, so it is closest to **rare**. The passage contrasts the normal heaviest showers with special occasions when that number of meteors may be seen every second. Not **amazing**: the display is amazing, but the word describes how seldom the occasions happen.

14. Sometimes, advertisers impact society by the use of advocacy ads, whose purpose is not to **persuade** the public to buy a product, but to change the public's view about a specific issue. Companies use this advertising to influence public opinion. Critics say that such ads are unfairly one-sided; advertisers say that the mass media have been equally one-sided in failing to report company views.

The word **persuade** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **A) convince**
To **persuade** means to make someone agree or act by giving reasons, so it is closest to **convince**. The ads try to change the public's view, not to sell a product. Not **dissuade**, which means the opposite: to persuade someone **not** to do something.

15. In the mid-1800s, gold and silver were common components of dentures. As a result, they were very expensive. However, in 1851, a process to harden the juices of certain tropical plants into rubber was discovered. This new product could be molded to a model of a patient's mouth and artificial teeth could be made. As a result, when used **in conjunction with** new manufacturing methods, these molds caused the cost of dentures to fall dramatically.

The phrase **in conjunction with** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **A) along with**
In conjunction with means together with or combined with, so it is closest to **along with**. The rubber molds, used together with new manufacturing methods, made dentures much cheaper.

16. The issue of where human life first arose has always been an **intriguing question** for science. Many guesses, or hypotheses, have been advanced, ranging from Asia to Europe. However, the oldest known human bones, or fossils, were discovered in East Africa in 1972. They are nearly 2 million years old. Their age was determined by measuring the age of the rocks surrounding them and comparing them to other fossils.

In stating that the origin of human life is an **intriguing question**, the author means that it _____.
✔ **A) interests a lot of scientists.**
Intriguing means very interesting and making people curious. Calling the origin of human life an **intriguing question** means that it **interests a lot of scientists**. The passage shows this with the many guesses, or hypotheses, that have been advanced. Not **will always be a mystery**: the passage describes a discovery, so it does not say the question can never be answered.

17. The Sioux and Cheyenne peoples told outsiders not to look for gold on Indian land. Eventually, the Sioux and Cheyenne had to defend their land against a U.S. army force in the Battle of Little Bighorn. This battle, also known as "Custer's Last Stand," was led by General George Custer. Custer was **cautioned** by his advisors not to underestimate the strength of his opponent, but ignored their advice, resulting in the defeat of the U.S. force.

The word **cautioned** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **A) warned**
To **caution** someone means to **warn** them about a danger or risk. Custer's advisors **cautioned** him **not to underestimate the strength of his opponent**, which is a warning about danger. Not **convinced**: the passage says he **ignored their advice**, so he was not persuaded.

18. Clothing and adornments used among certain cultures often reflect the social status of an individual. Body painting and tattooing are common methods used to distinguish social status. Other methods include the use of lip, ear, and nose rings, in addition to bracelets, arm bands, necklaces, and head ornaments made of delicate, colorful feathers. It is common for groups of people to use the natural resources around them to **work out** a way of visually designating social rank.

The verb **work out** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
✔ **D) develop**
Here **work out** means to plan or create something, so it is closest to **develop**. The passage says groups use natural resources to create a way of showing social rank, such as body painting and feather ornaments.

19. Species of alyssum are particularly suitable as edging plants for flower gardens. Alyssum is generally grayish with yellow or white flowers. One popular species is sweet alyssum, a perennial that grows up to nine inches tall. The narrow, green-gray leaf of the sweet alyssum usually **bears** many silvery hairs.

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

✔ **A) produces**

Here **bears** means has or grows, so it is closest to **produces**. The leaf **bears many silvery hairs**, meaning the hairs grow on it. Not **attracts**: the hairs are part of the leaf, not something drawn to it from outside.

20. In ancient times, the labyrinth was a structure composed of a complex series of passageways and chambers, probably at first designed to **baffle** enemies. A labyrinth either had branched paths with misleading ends, or it contained one long meandering path that led to a central end.

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

✔ **B) puzzle**

To **baffle** means to confuse completely, so it is closest to **puzzle**. The labyrinth's complex passageways and misleading ends were designed to confuse enemies. Not **obstruct**: the paths did not simply block enemies but made them lost and confused.

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