ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Upper Level Vocabulary Test 17

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1	**D**	2	**E**	3	**D**	4	**B**	5	**D**	6	**C**	7	**A**	8	**C**	9	**D**	10	**B**
11	**B**	12	**C**	13	**B**	14	**A**	15	**C**	16	**D**	17	**D**	18	**A**	19	**C**	20	**C**
21	**B**	22	**A**	23	**A**	24	**C**	25	**B**	26	**B**	27	**B**	28	**C**	29	**B**	30	**A**
31	**D**	32	**B**	33	**E**	34	**E**	35	**A**	36	**D**	37	**C**	38	**B**	39	**D**	40	**A**

Explanations

1. When I turned on the switch, the lights _____.
✔ **D) fused**
When lights **fuse**, they stop working because a fuse has melted after an electrical fault. It is British English, as in **The lights fused when I switched on the kettle. Flared** means burned brightly for a moment, which is not used for electric lights.

2. Be careful with that knife because it has a very sharp _____.
✔ **E) blade**
The **blade** is the flat, sharp cutting part of a knife. A **sharp blade** is the usual collocation. **Steel** is the metal, not the cutting edge.

3. They are _____ all those old houses to make room for a new Town Hall.
✔ **D) pulling down**
To **pull down** a building means to destroy it on purpose (demolish it). **Put down** is used for animals or rebellions, and **run down** means criticise or let something get worse.

4. _____ the bottle well before you pour out the medicine.
✔ **B) Shake**
You **shake** a bottle by moving it quickly up and down to mix what is inside, as in **Shake well before use**. Not **stir**: you stir a liquid with a spoon, not a closed bottle. **Agitate** is a technical word and is not used in everyday instructions like this.

5. I'm afraid I took your umbrella by _____.
✔ **D) mistake**
The fixed phrase is **by mistake**, meaning accidentally, without meaning to. We say **in error**, not **by error**.

6. The prisoners had spent almost a year digging a _____ before the guards discovered it.
✔ **C) tunnel**
A **tunnel** is a passage dug under the ground. Prisoners **dig a tunnel** to escape. A **subway** is a built underground walkway or, in American English, a train system.

7. I wish you'd let me speak for myself and not _____ the words out of my mouth.
✔ **A) take**
The fixed idiom is **take the words out of someone's mouth**, meaning to say what another person was going to say. The other verbs cannot be used in this idiom.

8. To get your illustrated guide to Great Britain, just fill in the _____ and send it with 50p to the Tourist Board.
✔ **C) coupon**
A **coupon** is a small printed form, often in a magazine, that you fill in and send to get something. A **cheque** is used to pay money, not to request a guide.

9. There's no _____ in going to the cinema now as the film's already started.
✔ **D) point**
The fixed phrase **There's no point in + -ing** means it is useless to do something: **There's no point in going now.** Not **cause** or **reason**, because these are not used with **in + -ing** in this pattern.

10. That's absolute nonsense; you're talking through the _____.
✔ **B) back of your head**
Talk through the back of your head is an informal British idiom meaning to talk nonsense. Not **skin of your teeth**: **by the skin of your teeth** means only just, as in **He escaped by the skin of his teeth.**

11. Without exercise many people's bodies become _____.
✔ **B) flabby**
Flabby describes a body or muscles that are soft and fat because of too little exercise. **Soggy** and **spongy** describe wet or soft things, not people's bodies.

12. "_____ man kills the thing he loves" is a well-known saying.
✔ **C) Each**
The quotation is from Oscar Wilde: **Each man kills the thing he loves. Each** is followed by a singular noun and verb (**man kills**). **All** would need **All men kill**.

13. He felt guilty about breaking off the engagement and often had a _____ of conscience.
✔ **B) twinge**
A **twinge of conscience** is a sudden small feeling of guilt, and it is the fixed collocation (also **a pang of conscience**). Not **pinch**: we say **a pinch of salt**, never **a pinch of conscience**.

14. The members of the team were very _____ and changed their plans at short notice.
✔ **A) flexible**
Flexible people can change their plans easily when the situation changes. **Supple** is used for bodies that bend easily, and **lenient** means not strict when punishing.

15. I visited many historic houses and castles _____ my summer holiday.
✓ **C) during**
During means at some time within a period: **during my summer holiday**. **Within** stresses a time limit (**within a week**) and is not natural here.

16. She likes classical music and is particularly _____ on Mozart.
✓ **D) keen**
Be keen on something means to like it very much: **She's keen on Mozart. Eager** and **enthusiastic** do not take **on**. We say **enthusiastic about**.

17. There's _____ telling what he will do if he's annoyed.
✓ **D) no**
The fixed phrase **There's no telling** means it is impossible to know: **There's no telling what he'll do. No** is used before the **-ing** form here, not **nothing** or **not**.

18. Tom's very spoilt and always demanding attention; I expect it's because he's _____ child.
✓ **A) an only**
An only child is a child who has no brothers or sisters. Only children are sometimes said to be spoilt. **A single child** and **a lone child** are not used with this meaning.

19. Actors have to _____ a play before they give a public performance.
✓ **C) rehearse**
To **rehearse** is to practise a play, a speech or music before performing it in public. **Practise** is used for skills (**practise the piano**), not for a whole play.

20. There was no _____ of anyone having entered the room.
✓ **C) sign**
There was no sign of means there was nothing to show that something had happened. **Signal** is a message or a light used to give information, like a traffic signal.

21. If your handbag has been stolen, you must _____ it to the police immediately.
✓ **B) report**
You **report** a crime **to** the police. **Inform** needs a person as its object (**inform the police of the theft**), so **inform it to the police** is wrong.

22. Has John paid you back the £5 you _____ him?
✓ **A) lent**
You **lend** money **to** someone, and later they **pay you back**. Not **borrowed**: you **borrow** money **from** someone, so **you borrowed him** is wrong.

23. Who _____ of going for this walk in the rain?
✓ **A) thought**
Think of + -ing means to have the idea of doing something: **Who thought of going…? Decide** and **want** need **to + infinitive**, and **insist** takes **on**.

24. When he retired, my father _____ his business to my eldest brother.
✓ **C) made over**
To **make over** property or a business **to** someone means to give it to them officially. **Make out** means understand or see with difficulty, and **make up** means invent.

25. The _____ at that restaurant is excellent.
✓ **B) service**
Service in a restaurant is the way staff look after and serve customers. **Serving** is one portion of food, not the quality of the staff's work.

26. I enjoyed that book so much that I read it from _____ to end in one day.
✓ **B) beginning**
The fixed pair is **from beginning to end**, meaning completely. **Start** pairs with **finish** (**from start to finish**), not with **end**.

27. The kidnappers demanded a _____ of £509,000.
✓ **B) ransom**
A **ransom** is money demanded for setting free a person who has been kidnapped. A **reward** is money given for helping, for example for finding a lost dog.

28. I wish you wouldn't keep _____ my time asking such silly questions.
✓ **C) wasting**
Waste time means use time badly or for nothing useful. **Keep + -ing** shows annoyance at repeated actions. **Spend time** is neutral and does not suggest the time is useless.

29. I only received the application _____ for the job yesterday.
✓ **B) form**
An **application form** is the document you fill in to apply for a job or a course. It is a fixed collocation. We do not say **application paper**.

30. When he came back from holiday, his skin was beautifully _____.
✓ **A) tanned**
Tanned skin has become attractively brown in the sun. The word **beautifully** is the clue. Not **sunburnt**, because that means red and painful, which is not beautiful.

31. Did you have a good _____ when you went to Scotland?
✓ **D) time**
Have a good time is the fixed phrase meaning enjoy yourself. **A good stay** is possible but not natural after **when you went to**.

32. Five hundred people were _____ in the earthquake.
✓ **B) buried**
In an earthquake, buildings fall and people can be **buried** under the ruins. **Flooded** is used for water, and **sunk** is used for ships.

33. When I paid for my groceries in the supermarket, the cashier gave me the wrong _____.
✓ **E) change**
Change is the money you get back when you pay more than the price: **She gave me the wrong change.** Not **rebate**: a **rebate** is money returned to you later, for example part of your tax.

34. He won't be able to drive his car unless he _____ his licence.
✓ **E) renews**
To **renew** a licence or passport means to get it made valid for a further period after it ends. **Revise** means study again or change, and **remit** means send money.

35. Yesterday Stephen studied for five hours _____.
✓ **A) on end**
On end after a period of time means without stopping: **five hours on end**. Not **at length**, because it means for a long time or in detail and is not used after a number of hours.

36. The _____ for the course are £50 a term.
✓ **D) fees**
Fees is the money you pay for professional services or education: **course fees**, **school fees**. **Subscriptions** are paid regularly for magazines or club membership.

37. Do you wear your watch on your right _____ because you are left-handed?
✓ **C) wrist**
The **wrist** is the joint between your hand and your arm, where you wear a watch. The **palm** is the inside of your hand, and the **ankle** is the joint above your foot.

38. He arrived at a most _____ moment; I was just getting into the bath.
✓ **B) inopportune**
Inopportune means happening at a bad or inconvenient time, and **an inopportune moment** is a common collocation. Not **importunate**: this looks similar but means asking for something in an annoying, persistent way.

39. This road is _____ to flood in winter.
✓ **D) liable**
Be liable to + infinitive means to be likely to do something, usually something bad: **liable to flood**. **Susceptible** is followed by **to + noun** (**susceptible to flooding**), and **conducive to** means helping something good to happen.

40. Buying in bulk _____ one to make substantial savings.
✓ **A) enables**
Enable someone to do something means make it possible for them to do it. **Facilitate** takes a thing as its object (**facilitates savings**), not **someone to do**. **Empower** suggests giving authority or confidence, which does not fit saving money.

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