ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Verbal Advantage – Level 04 Review Test

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

Explanations

1. Which word means specifically an amateur practitioner of an art?
✔ **D) dilettante**
A **dilettante** is an amateur who dabbles in an art or field of knowledge, often superficially. **Tyro**, **novice** and **neophyte** all mean a beginner in any field, not specifically an amateur in the arts.

2. Which word is an antonym of ***garrulous***?
✔ **B) laconic**
Garrulous means excessively talkative. **Laconic** means using very few words, so it is the opposite. **Verbose**, **loquacious** and **voluble** are all synonyms of garrulous.

3. The combining form ***auto-*** means _____.
✔ **C) self**
Auto- comes from Greek **autos**, 'self', as in **autobiography** (a life written by oneself) and **automatic** (acting by itself).

4. The combining form ***pan-*** means _____.
✔ **B) all**
Pan- comes from Greek **pas, pantos**, 'all', as in **panacea** (a cure for all ills) and **pantheon** (all the gods).

5. Which phrase is ***not*** redundant?
✔ **D) all of the above phrases are redundant**
All three phrases are redundant: a **journal** is by definition a daily record, the **laity** are by definition nonprofessionals, and a **panacea** is already a cure for all ills. So no phrase is free of redundancy.

6. Which is ***not*** an accepted meaning of ***pantheon***?
✔ **A) a collection of the best examples of something**
Pantheon can mean all the gods of a people, a temple dedicated to all the gods, or a group of highly respected people (**the pantheon of jazz greats**). It does not mean a collection of the best examples of something; that is closer to **anthology** or **compendium**.

7. ***Insipid, vapid***, and ***jejune*** are synonyms of _____.
✔ **C) prosaic**
Prosaic means dull, commonplace and lacking imagination. **Insipid**, **vapid** and **jejune** all describe something flat, uninteresting or lacking substance, so they are its synonyms.

8. Which pair of words is ***not*** synonymous?
✔ **C) imposter, dissident**
An **imposter** (also spelled **impostor**) pretends to be someone else, while a **dissident** openly disagrees with an established authority. The other pairs all name kinds of fakes or swindlers: **fraud/fake**, **humbug/charlatan**, **quack/mountebank**.

9. ***Mechanical, routine***, and ***listless*** are synonyms of _____.
✔ **D) perfunctory**
Perfunctory describes something done routinely, mechanically and without interest or care (**a perfunctory nod**). Not **jaded**, which means worn out or dulled by overuse or overindulgence.

10. Which statement does **not** apply to ***sophistry***?
✔ **B) it is confusing**
Sophistry is clever, plausible but deceptive reasoning, meant to mislead. Its danger is that it sounds convincing, so 'confusing' is not one of its defining features.

11. Miss Thistlebottom, the hidebound grammarian, is the creation of _____.
✔ **A) Theodore M. Bernstein**
Miss Thistlebottom, the rigid schoolteacher who enforces false grammar rules, comes from Theodore M. Bernstein's usage book **Miss Thistlebottom's Hobgoblins** (1971).

12. What is a lexicographer?
✔ **C) a maker of dictionaries**
A **lexicographer** is a person who writes or compiles dictionaries (Greek **lexikon**, 'word book', + **-graphos**, 'writer'). An expert on word origins is an **etymologist**.

13. Which word is a synonym of ***mundane***?
✔ **A) sublunary**
Mundane means worldly, earthly or ordinary. **Sublunary**, literally 'beneath the moon', also means earthly or worldly. **Celestial**, **sublime** and **ethereal** suggest the heavenly or exalted, which is the opposite.

14. In ancient Greece, a ***myriad*** was _____.
✔ **C) a division of ten thousand soldiers**
Greek **myrias** meant ten thousand, and a **myriad** was a division of ten thousand soldiers. Today **myriad** means a very great number (**a myriad of stars**).

15. Which pair of words is synonymous?
✓ **D) exemplary, estimable**
Exemplary (serving as a fine example) and **estimable** (deserving respect) both mean worthy of praise. The other pairs are opposites: praiseworthy words set against shameful ones such as **deplorable**, **ignominious** and **contemptible**.

16. Which of the following is least likely to make someone jaded?
✓ **B) inactivity**
Jaded means worn out, tired or dulled, typically from overwork, abuse or overindulgence. Inactivity does not wear a person out in this way, so it is least likely to make someone jaded.

17. Which word is a synonym of ***latitudinarian***?
✓ **C) catholic**
Latitudinarian means tolerant and broad-minded, especially in religion. **Catholic** (lowercase) means universal or broad in sympathies (**catholic tastes**). **Purblind**, **obtuse** and **myopic** suggest narrow or dull understanding.

18. Which sentence illustrates proper usage?
✓ **A) This is between you and me.**
Between is a preposition, so the pronouns after it must be in the object form: **between you and me**. **Between you and I** is a common hypercorrection.

19. By derivation, the word ***pontificate*** is related to _____.
✓ **B) the Pope**
Pontificate comes from Latin **pontifex**, a high priest, a title later used for the Pope (the **pontiff**). To pontificate is to speak in a pompous, dogmatic way, as if with papal authority.

20. Which word means expressing opinion as if it were fact?
✓ **C) dogmatic**
Dogmatic means stating opinions in a positive, arrogant way, as if they were established facts. **Demonstrable** means capable of being proved, which is the opposite idea.

21. In ***ambivalent*** and ***ambidextrous***, the combining form ***ambi-*** means _____.
✓ **D) both**
Latin **ambi-** means 'both'. **Ambivalent** is having conflicting feelings toward both sides, and **ambidextrous** is able to use both hands equally well. Not 'around', which is the meaning of **ambi-** only in a few words such as **ambient**.

22. To ***speculate***, ***surmise***, and ***conjecture*** all mean _____.
✓ **B) to guess**
Speculate, **surmise** and **conjecture** all mean to guess, or to form an opinion without complete evidence. **Surmise** in particular suggests guessing from slight evidence.

23. Which word is an antonym of ***surreptitious***?
✓ **A) manifest**
Surreptitious means secret and stealthy. **Manifest** means clear, obvious and openly visible, so it is the antonym. **Furtive**, **clandestine** and **covert** are all synonyms of surreptitious.

24. Which is the proper pronunciation of ***heinous***?
✓ **B) HAY-nis**
Heinous (very wicked, shocking) has two syllables. The first sounds like **hay**, so it is said **HAY-nis** (or HAY-nus), rhyming with **Janus**. Three-syllable pronunciations such as HEE-nee-us and HAY-nee-us are common errors. Some dictionaries accept HEE-nis, but the book recommends HAY-nis.

25. Which word is an antonym of ***impeccable***?
✓ **C) culpable**
Impeccable means flawless, free from fault or blame. **Culpable** means deserving blame, so it is the antonym. **Perfunctory**, **extemporaneous** and **jaded** are not opposites of 'faultless'.

26. Which word means a small sin, minor fault or flaw?
✓ **D) peccadillo**
A **peccadillo** (from Spanish, 'little sin') is a small, trivial offence or fault. Not **macula**, which is a spot or blemish, especially on the skin, and not **stigma**, which is a mark of disgrace.

27. Which word means a lull, hiatus?
✓ **B) respite**
A **respite** is a short period of rest or relief from something difficult, such as a lull or pause (**a brief respite from the heat**). **Acquiescence** means passive agreement, not a pause.

28. In ***preferable, formidable, comparable***, and ***applicable***, where does the stress properly fall?
✓ **A) on the first syllable**
In careful usage these words are stressed on the first syllable: **PREF-er-uh-bul**, **FOR-mi-duh-bul**, **KAHM-pur-uh-bul**, **AP-li-kuh-bul**. Second-syllable stress (**for-MID-able**, **com-PAIR-able**) is widely heard but traditionally considered less correct.

29. The question "**What are you inferring?**" means _____.
✓ **A) What are you deducing or concluding?**
To **infer** is to deduce or conclude from evidence; it is what the listener does. To **imply** is to suggest indirectly; it is what the speaker does. So 'What are you inferring?' asks what conclusion you are drawing. Not 'suggesting or indicating', which is the meaning of **imply**.

30. "Amanda was _____ to improve her verbal skills." In careful usage, which word properly should fill the blank in that sentence?
✓ **B) eager**
In careful usage, **eager** expresses keen, positive desire, while **anxious** implies worry or uneasiness. Amanda looks forward to improving her skills, so **eager** fits.

31. By derivation, a ***cornucopia*** is _____.
✓ **B) a horn of plenty**
Cornucopia comes from Latin **cornu copiae**, 'horn of plenty', a goat's horn overflowing with fruit and grain. Today it means an abundant supply (**a cornucopia of ideas**).

32. Which word is an antonym of ***stoic***?
✓ **C) ardent**
Stoic means showing little emotion and calmly enduring pain or hardship. **Ardent** means passionate and full of strong feeling, so it is the opposite. Not **apathetic**, which, like stoic, suggests a lack of emotion.

33. Which pair of words are synonyms?
✓ **B) protean, mercurial**
Protean (changing form easily, like the sea god Proteus) and **mercurial** (quickly changing in mood) both mean changeable. The other pairs set a changeable word against a steady one, such as **immutable**, **invariable** or **quiescent**.

34. ***Unsullied, immaculate***, and ***pristine*** are antonyms of _____.
✓ **D) squalid**
Unsullied, **immaculate** and **pristine** all mean perfectly clean and pure. **Squalid** means filthy and wretched, so it is their antonym. Not **impeccable**, which is a near synonym meaning flawless.

35. ***Conjecture*** and ***abject*** both come from the Latin verb ***jacere***, which means _____.
✓ **C) to throw**
Latin **jacere** means 'to throw'. **Conjecture** is literally 'throwing together' ideas into a guess, and **abject** is literally 'thrown away', hence utterly miserable or contemptible.

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