ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Verbal Advantage – Level 07 Review Test

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Explanations

1. Something that deviates from the norm is _____.
✔ **C) anomalous**
Anomalous means departing from the normal rule or pattern; irregular or abnormal: **an anomalous result**. Not **analogous**, which means similar or comparable, the near-opposite idea.

2. Which word is ***not*** a synonym of ***didactic***?
✔ **D) ascetic**
Didactic means intended to teach or instruct, often in a moralizing way. **Pedagogic**, **preceptive** (giving rules or precepts), **expository** (explaining) and **hortatory** (urging, exhorting) all share this teaching or advising sense. **Ascetic** means self-denying and austere, so it is not a synonym.

3. Which word is ***not*** an antonym of ***obsequious***?
✔ **C) sycophantic**
Obsequious means excessively eager to please or obey; fawning. **Recalcitrant**, **intractable**, **refractory** and **intransigent** all mean stubbornly disobedient or uncompromising, so they are antonyms. **Sycophantic** means flattering and servile, which is a synonym of obsequious, not an antonym.

4. Which word is a synonym of ***rarefied***?
✔ **B) ethereal**
Rarefied means thin or lofty, and figuratively refined, esoteric, far removed from everyday life. **Ethereal** (light, airy, heavenly, delicate) shares this sense. Not **effusive**, which means gushing and overly emotional.

5. Which word is an antonym of ***pernicious***?
✔ **C) salubrious**
Pernicious means highly harmful or destructive, especially in a gradual or subtle way. **Salubrious** means healthful, wholesome, promoting well-being, so it is the antonym. **Malign**, **deleterious**, **baneful** and **noisome** all mean harmful or offensive, so they are synonyms.

6. Which phrase is ***not*** redundant?
✔ **A) cure for all ills**
A redundant phrase repeats an idea already contained in a word. A **fad** is by nature passing, a **consensus** is already agreement of opinion, **whence** already means 'from where', and a **gambit** is already an opening move. **Cure for all ills** is not redundant: it simply defines **panacea**. Only **panacea for all ills** would be redundant.

7. Which word best describes a ***catholic*** person?
✔ **A) latitudinarian**
Catholic (lower case) means universal, broad-minded, wide-ranging in tastes or sympathies. A **latitudinarian** is tolerant and liberal in opinions, especially in religion, so it fits. **Dogmatic** and **parochial** (narrow, provincial) are the opposite.

8. ***Reticent, diffident***, and ***taciturn*** are antonyms of _____.
✔ **B) effusive**
Reticent, **diffident** and **taciturn** all describe someone reserved and unwilling to talk or express feelings. **Effusive** means pouring out feelings freely and gushingly, so it is their antonym. Not **laconic**, which means using few words and is therefore a synonym.

9. Which word is ***not*** a synonym of ***contentious***?
✔ **D) mendacious**
Contentious means quarrelsome, given to arguing. **Disputatious**, **belligerent**, **litigious** (fond of disputes or lawsuits) and **pugnacious** all share this combative sense. **Mendacious** means lying or untruthful, so it is not a synonym.

10. Which word is a synonym of ***assiduous***?
✔ **C) sedulous**
Assiduous means diligent, persistent and hard-working. **Sedulous** means the same: carefully and persistently attentive. **Indolent**, **languid**, **phlegmatic** and **otiose** (idle, useless) all suggest laziness or lack of energy, the opposite idea.

11. ***Chicanery*** and ***casuistry*** are synonyms of _____.
✔ **C) duplicity**
Chicanery is trickery or deception, especially through clever legal manipulation. **Casuistry** is subtle but misleading reasoning used to justify wrong conduct. Both involve deceit, so they are synonyms of **duplicity** (double-dealing, deceitfulness). Not **bombast**, which is pompous, inflated language.

12. What is a genuflection?
✔ **B) a bending of the knee**
A **genuflection** is the act of bending the knee, especially in worship or respect (from Latin **genu**, knee, and **flectere**, to bend). It is often connected with religion, which makes **a prayer** or **a blessing** tempting, but the word refers only to the physical gesture.

13. Which word means to inform?
✔ **B) apprise**
To **apprise** means to inform or notify: **Please apprise me of any changes.** It is often confused with **appraise**, which means to estimate the value or quality of something.

14. Which word means rash, reckless or abrupt, sudden?
✔ **A) precipitate**
Precipitate (adjective) describes actions or people: rash, hasty, reckless, or abrupt and sudden: **a precipitate decision**. **Precipitous** properly means extremely steep, like a cliff: **a precipitous drop**. The two are often confused.

15. In the Trojan War, who was king and commander of the Myrmidons?
✔ **D) Achilles**
In Homer's account of the Trojan War, the Myrmidons were the fierce warriors of Thessaly who followed **Achilles**. Their name gave us **myrmidon**, a loyal follower who carries out orders without question. Hector was a Trojan prince, and Odysseus was king of Ithaca.

16. Something antediluvian is _____.
✔ **D) old or old-fashioned**
Antediluvian literally means 'before the Flood' (Latin **ante**, before, and **diluvium**, flood). It is used to describe something extremely old or hopelessly old-fashioned: **antediluvian attitudes**.

17. Which word by derivation means great-spirited?
✔ **B) magnanimous**
Magnanimous comes from Latin **magnus**, great, and **animus**, spirit or mind. It means generous, noble and forgiving. Not **pusillanimous**, which by derivation means 'small-spirited' (cowardly), the exact opposite.

18. Which word denotes abusive language that is filthy and obscene?
✔ **C) billingsgate**
Billingsgate is coarse, vulgar, abusive language, named after the London fish market whose workers were famous for foul speech. **Invective**, **obloquy** and **vituperation** also refer to abusive or bitter language, but they do not specifically mean filthy or obscene language.

19. Which word means to attack violently with words, express angry disapproval?
✔ **D) inveigh**
To **inveigh** (usually **inveigh against**) means to attack violently with words or protest strongly: **He inveighed against the new tax.** Not **bombast**, which is a noun meaning pompous, inflated speech, not angry attack. **Coruscate** means to sparkle, **obviate** means to prevent or make unnecessary, and **capitulate** means to surrender.

20. Which phrase does ***not*** properly apply to a deus ex machina?
✔ **B) sinister plot**
Deus ex machina ('god from the machine') comes from ancient drama, where a god was lowered onto the stage to solve the plot. It now means any unexpected, improbable event or device that suddenly resolves a difficult situation. A **sinister plot** has nothing to do with it.

21. What is a docent?
✔ **C) a lecturing tour guide**
A **docent** (from Latin **docere**, to teach) is a guide who gives informative talks, especially in a museum or gallery. In some universities it also means a lecturer below professor rank. Not **an itinerant teacher**, because a docent is not defined by travelling from place to place.

22. Which word is an antonym of ***fetid***?
✔ **A) redolent**
Fetid means having a strong, offensive smell; stinking. **Redolent** means fragrant or sweet-smelling, so it is the antonym. **Putrid**, **graveolent**, **mephitic** and **noisome** all describe bad or foul smells, so they are synonyms.

23. In the phrase ***mea culpa***, what does ***culpa*** mean?
✔ **A) fault**
Mea culpa is Latin for 'through my fault', an admission of guilt. **Culpa** means **fault** or blame, as in **culpable** (deserving blame). Not **mistake**: culpa refers to guilt or blame, not simply to an error.

24. Someone who makes an inappropriate or tiresome display of knowledge is _____.
✔ **D) a pedant**
A **pedant** is someone who shows off learning or insists on minor rules and details in a tiresome way. Not **a parvenu**, who is a person newly risen to wealth or status who lacks the manners of that class.

25. Which word is a synonym of ***inchoate***?
✔ **C) nascent**
Inchoate means just begun, not yet fully formed or developed: **an inchoate plan**. **Nascent** means coming into existence, beginning to develop, so it is a synonym. Not **senescent**, which means growing old, the opposite idea.

26. Which set of three words contains a word that is ***not*** a synonym of the others?
✔ **B) mendacious, veracious, disingenuous**
Mendacious (lying) and **disingenuous** (insincere, pretending to be frank) both suggest dishonesty. **Veracious** means truthful and honest, so it is the odd one out. In each of the other sets all three words are synonyms: **scrupulous, upright, ethical** (honest and moral); **hypocritical, two-faced, duplicitous** (insincere, double-dealing); **evasive, prevaricating, deceitful** (avoiding or hiding the truth).

27. Which word means pertaining to twilight?
✔ **C) crepuscular**
Crepuscular (from Latin **crepusculum**, twilight) means relating to or like twilight. It also describes animals active at dawn and dusk: **Bats are crepuscular.** Not **subfuscous**, which means dusky or somewhat dark in colour, not specifically 'relating to twilight'.

28. Which is the traditional and proper pronunciation of ***ribald***?
✔ **B) RIB-uld**
Ribald (coarsely humorous, vulgar, indecent) is traditionally pronounced **RIB-uld**, rhyming with 'dribbled'. The spelling-based pronunciations **RY-bawld** and **RIB-awld** are common but not the traditional standard.

29. What is an ***arriviste***?
✓ **B) a vulgar and often ruthless social climber**
An **arriviste** (French, 'one who has arrived') is an ambitious social climber, often vulgar and ruthless, who has recently gained wealth or status. Not **a faithful servant or subordinate**, which describes a **myrmidon**. **A convert to a religion or cause** describes a **proselyte**.

30. Which three words are synonyms?
✓ **D) tractable, complaisant, docile**
Tractable, **complaisant** and **docile** all mean easily managed, obliging, willing to comply. Each of the other sets mixes the two opposite ideas, 'yielding' and 'unyielding'. **Unrelenting** and **implacable** are unyielding, but **obliging** is yielding. **Compliant** and **compromising** are yielding, but **obdurate** is unyielding. **Inexorable** and **intransigent** are unyielding, but **acquiescent** is yielding.

31. Which word does ***not*** precisely apply to a sanctimonious person?
✓ **D) redoubtable**
A **sanctimonious** person makes a hypocritical show of being morally superior or pious. Such a person can be called **hypocritical**, **disingenuous**, **unctuous** (smug and oily) and **affected**. **Redoubtable** means formidable or worthy of respect, so it does not apply.

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