ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Verbal Advantage – Level 08 Review Test

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Explanations

1. Which word comes from a Latin word meaning “the fee a miller received for grinding grain”?
✔ **C) emolument**
Emolument comes from Latin **emolumentum**, originally the fee paid to a miller for grinding grain. Today it means payment for work or office: salary, fees or profit. **Remuneration** also means payment, but it comes from Latin **munus**, 'gift'. **Perquisite** (a perk) means an extra benefit on top of pay.

2. Which three words are synonyms?
✔ **B) intransigent, obdurate, recalcitrant**
Intransigent, **obdurate** and **recalcitrant** all mean stubbornly refusing to change, obey or compromise. Each of the other sets contains an opposite: **complaisant** (eager to please), **malleable** (easily shaped or influenced) and **acquiescent** (accepting without protest).

3. Which word is ***not*** a synonym of ***sagacious***?
✔ **C) credulous**
Sagacious means wise, with keen practical judgment. **Percipient**, **sapient**, **perspicacious** and **judicious** all describe wisdom or insight. **Credulous** means too ready to believe things, which is the opposite of shrewd wisdom.

4. An importunate person is _____.
✔ **D) demanding**
Importunate means persistently and annoyingly demanding, pressing for something again and again: **an importunate salesman who wouldn't take no for an answer**. Not **rude**: an importunate person may be irritating, but the core idea is persistent demanding, not bad manners.

5. ***Alacrity*** connotes all of the following except for _____.
✔ **E) suddenness**
Alacrity means cheerful readiness: doing something promptly, eagerly and in a lively way (**She accepted the offer with alacrity**). It does not suggest **suddenness**, which means happening unexpectedly. Alacrity is about willing speed, not surprise.

6. Which word is an antonym of ***palliate***?
✔ **C) exacerbate**
Palliate means to ease or lessen something bad (pain, symptoms, an offence) without curing it. Its antonym is **exacerbate**, to make worse. Not **mitigate**: that is a synonym of palliate. **Propitiate** means to appease.

7. A captious person could reasonably be all of the following except _____.
✔ **D) reprobate**
A **captious** person is fault-finding and quick to criticize trivial points. Such a person could easily be **mordant** (bitingly sarcastic), **acerbic** (sharp and harsh), **acrimonious** (bitter) or **querulous** (complaining). **Reprobate** means morally depraved or unprincipled, which has nothing to do with fault-finding.

8. Which verb means to make corrections in a text?
✔ **C) emend**
Emend means to correct or improve a text by editing it: **The scholar emended several corrupt passages.** Not **expurgate** or **bowdlerize**: these mean to remove offensive material. **Interpolate** means to insert new material.

9. ***Apocryphal*** and ***suppositious*** are synonyms of _____.
✔ **B) spurious**
Apocryphal (of doubtful authenticity) and **supposititious** (substituted with intent to deceive, not genuine) are synonyms of **spurious**, which means false or fake. Not **plausible**: something spurious may seem plausible, but plausible means believable, not false.

10. Which word comes from a Latin verb meaning to will or wish?
✔ **B) volition**
Volition comes from Latin **velle**, 'to will or wish'. It means the act or power of choosing for yourself: **She left of her own volition. Succor** comes from 'to run to help', **obviate** from 'to meet in the way', and **truculent** from 'fierce'.

11. Which words are ***not*** synonyms?
✔ **A) malefactor, pariah**
A **malefactor** is an evildoer or criminal. A **pariah** is an outcast, someone rejected by society, who has not necessarily done anything wrong. The other pairs all name rascals or wrongdoers: **reprobate/varlet**, **rapscallion/scofflaw**, **blackguard/miscreant**.

12. Which word is a synonym of ***quixotic***?
✔ **B) chimerical**
Quixotic (from Don Quixote) means idealistic in an impractical, romantic way. **Chimerical** means wildly fanciful or imaginary, as in **a chimerical scheme**, so the two are synonyms. Not **ethereal**: that means delicate and light, almost heavenly. **Utilitarian** is nearly the opposite of quixotic.

13. What is ***putrefaction***?
✔ **D) decay**
Putrefaction is the process of rotting or decay, especially of organic matter, which usually produces a foul smell. It is related to **putrid**, rotten. Not **purity**: despite the similar spelling, it means the opposite.

14. The Greek god Hermes carried a winged staff with two serpents coiled around it. This staff is now often used as a symbol of the medical profession. What is it called?
✔ **D) a caduceus**
A **caduceus** is Hermes's (Mercury's) winged staff with two snakes wound around it. It is widely used as a medical emblem, though strictly the traditional symbol of medicine is the one-snake Rod of Asclepius. A **nostrum** is a quack remedy, a **sinecure** is a paid job with little work, and a **martinet** is a strict disciplinarian.

15. ***Compunction, poignant***, and ***pungent*** all come from a Latin verb meaning _____.
✔ **C) to prick or sting**
All three come from Latin **pungere**, 'to prick or sting'. **Compunction** is a prick of conscience (guilt), **poignant** describes something that stings the emotions, and **pungent** describes a sharp, stinging smell or taste.

16. Which word is an antonym of ***estrangement*** and ***disaffection***?
✔ **A) propitiation**
Estrangement and **disaffection** mean alienation, loss of friendly feeling. **Propitiation** means appeasing or winning someone over to restore goodwill, so it is the opposite. **Suppuration** is the forming of pus, **compunction** is guilt, and **expatiation** is speaking at length.

17. Which set of words contains a word that is ***not*** eponymous?
✔ **B) gargantuan, tantamount, epicurean**
An **eponymous** word comes from a person's or character's name. **Tantamount** (equivalent) comes from Anglo-French **tant amunter**, 'to amount to as much', not from a name. **Gargantuan** (Rabelais's Gargantua) and **epicurean** (Epicurus) are eponyms, and so are all the words in the other sets: Martinet, Maverick, Chauvin, Quixote, the Earl of Sandwich, Hercules, Mercury, Silhouette and Draco.

18. Which word means narrow-minded, bigoted, and self-righteous moral censorship?
✔ **D) Comstockery**
Comstockery comes from Anthony Comstock, a 19th-century American crusader against 'obscene' books and art. It means prudish, self-righteous censorship. Not **expurgation**: that is the removal of offensive passages, but it lacks the idea of bigoted moral zeal. **Pyrrhonism** is extreme scepticism.

19. Which word entered English from Tamil, one of the languages of India?
✔ **C) pariah**
Pariah comes from Tamil **paraiyar**, the name of a group historically treated as outcasts in southern India. In English it means a social outcast: **He became a pariah after the scandal. Offal**, **cavil** and **jejune** come from Germanic or Latin sources.

20. Which word is a synonym of ***germane***?
✔ **A) apposite**
Germane means relevant and closely related to the subject. **Apposite** means apt and well suited to the matter at hand, so the two are synonyms. **Incipient** means just beginning, and **pernicious** means harmful.

21. Which word is ***not*** a synonym of ***licentious***?
✔ **E) lissome**
Licentious means sexually unrestrained or immoral. **Libidinous**, **lubricious**, **libertine** and **lickerish** all share this meaning of lust or lewdness. **Lissome** means slim, supple and graceful, which has nothing to do with morals.

22. Which word means outdated, old and worn out?
✔ **C) superannuated**
Superannuated means outdated, too old to be useful, or worn out by age, as in **superannuated equipment**. It can also describe a person retired because of age, as in **a superannuated clerk**. Not **wizened**: that means shrivelled and wrinkled with age, and it describes appearance, not being out of date. **Vapid** means dull and lifeless.

23. Which phrase is ***not*** an appropriate use of the word ***egregious***?
✔ **B) an egregious success**
Egregious once meant 'remarkable' but now means conspicuously bad or flagrant. It goes naturally with **fool**, **lie** and **mistake**. **An egregious success** misuses the word, because success is positive.

24. What is an ***epigram***?
✔ **B) a short, witty poem or a short, pointed, clever statement**
An **epigram** is a short, witty poem or a brief, clever, pointed saying, for example Wilde's **I can resist everything except temptation.** Don't confuse it with similar words: an inscription on a tomb is an **epitaph**, and an inscription on a building or a quotation at the start of a book is an **epigraph**.

25. Which word is a synonym of ***expatiate***?
✔ **A) descant**
Expatiate means to speak or write at length and in detail on a subject. **Descant** (as a verb) has the same meaning: to talk freely and at length. **Adduce** means to cite something as evidence, and **mollify** means to soothe.

26. By definition, which of the following accompanies a sinecure?
✔ **D) emolument**
A **sinecure** is a position that requires little or no work but still pays, so by definition it comes with an **emolument** (salary or fee). None of the other options is part of the definition.

27. Which of the following statements does ***not*** properly apply to something stolid?
✔ **A) It is intransigent.**
Stolid means showing little emotion, dull and unexcitable. **Apathetic**, **impassive** and **phlegmatic** all fit this meaning. **Intransigent** means stubbornly uncompromising. That describes an attitude of resistance, not a lack of feeling, so it does not apply.

28. Which word is a synonym of ***imbroglio***?
✔ **D) quandary**
An **imbroglio** is a confused, complicated or embarrassing situation, an entanglement. **Quandary** (a perplexing predicament) is the closest synonym. Not **machination**: that is a crafty plot, which may cause an imbroglio but is not the situation itself.

29. Which of the following can be mellifluous?
✔ **B) blandishment**
Mellifluous literally means 'flowing with honey': sweetly smooth, especially of speech or sound. **Blandishment** (flattering, coaxing talk) can be mellifluous. **Invective** and **admonishment** are harsh, **refulgence** is radiance, and **obeisance** is a respectful bow.

30. Which words suggest moving with nimbleness, agility, and grace?
✔ **C) lithe, lissome**
Lithe and **lissome** both suggest moving with nimbleness, agility and grace. **Limber** means flexible, able to bend easily, and does not necessarily imply grace. That is why every option containing **limber** is wrong.

31. What did Thomas Bowdler do to Shakespeare's works?
✔ **B) He expurgated them.**
In **The Family Shakespeare** (his edition of 1818), Thomas Bowdler removed words and passages he thought unfit for family reading. In other words, he **expurgated** them, and that gave us the verb **bowdlerize**. Not **emended**: emending means correcting errors, not cutting offensive content.

32. ***Sated*** and ***satiated*** are synonyms of _____.
✔ **C) surfeited**
Sated, **satiated** and **surfeited** all mean filled to the point of excess, having had more than enough: **surfeited with rich food**. Not **superannuated**, which means outdated or too old.

33. Which statement is correct?
✔ **A) Consul is properly pronounced KAHN-sul.**
Consul is properly pronounced **KAHN-sul**, with the same first syllable as **conscience**. **KOWN-sul** confuses it with **council** or **counsel**, so it is a mispronunciation, not an accepted variant.

34. Which mispronunciation is an example of metathesis?
✔ **B) JOO-luh-ree for jewelry**
Metathesis is the transposition of sounds within a word. Saying **JOO-luh-ree** for **jewelry** (JOO-ul-ree) swaps the order of the l sound and the vowel. **GREE-vee-us** adds an extra syllable, **LY-ber-ee** drops a sound, and **pro-noun-ciation** wrongly copies the vowel of **pronounce**. None of these is a swap.

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