BLOGS

How to get the Perfect Score in Synonym and Antonym Questions

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Synonym, antonym and homonym they all form part of vocabulary and are asked frequently in the law entrance examinations. These types of questions carry relevant weight-age in the examination.

First let us understand their meaning.

Synonyms mean the similar meaning words i.e. those words which can be used interchangeably.

Antonyms are opposite meaning words i.e. the words which carry totally different meaning from each other.

Homonyms are words similar in sound or pronunciation but different in meaning i.e. the words which have similar sound but they cannot be used interchangeably. Eg. Access and Excess these words have a similar sound but carry a totally different meaning. Access means to approach and Excess means more than enough.

Questions on synonyms and antonyms are generally expected to be asked in a passage form. To solve them one needs to have rich vocabulary but as it is humanly impossible to know the meaning of each and every word, so to answer them you can use the following tricks:

Firstly, identify the word in the passage and read the sentence carefully. In order to understand the meaning of the sentence more, also read the succeeding and preceding sentences to the sentence.

Secondly, try to gather the tone of the sentence i.e. whether it is positive or negative, then choose the word accordingly.

Thirdly, read the options given carefully and try to put them in the sentence in place of the asked word and check which option suits the most. And if antonym is asked then try to find the only word which does not at all deliver the sense of the sentence on replacement with the asked word.



Let us try to apply these tricks in the sample passage: (source: https://www.discovermagazine.com/mind/how-your-brain-can-control-time)

These days, new kinds of experiments using everything from computer simulations to brain scans to genetically engineered mice are helping unlock the nature of mental time. And their results show that the brain does not use a single stopwatch. Instead, it has several ways to tell time, and none of them seems to work like a conventional clock.

Dean Buonomano, a neuroscientist at UCLA, argues that in order to perceive time in fractions of a second, our brains tell time as if they were observing ripples on a pond. Let's say you are listening to a chirping bird. Two of its chirps are separated by a tenth of a second. The first chirp triggers a spike of voltage in some auditory neurons, which in turn causes some other neurons to fire as well. The signals reverberate among the neurons for about half a second, just as it takes time for the ripples from a rock thrown into a pond to disappear. When the second chirp comes, the neurons have not yet settled down. As a result, the second chirp creates a different pattern of signals. Buonomano argues that our brains can compare the second pattern to the first to tell how much time has passed. The brain needs no clock because time is encoded in the way neurons behave.

If Buonomano turns out to be right, he will have explained only our fastest time telling, because after half a second, the brain's ripples dissipate. On the scale of seconds to hours, the brain must use some other strategy. Warren Meck of Duke University argues that the brain measures long stretches of time by producing pulses. But the brain does not then count the pulses in the way a clock does. Instead, Meck suspects, it does something more debonair. It listens to the pulses as if they were music.

Meck first began to develop his musical model when he discovered how to rob rats of their perception of time. He had only to destroy certain clumps of neurons deep inside the brain. Some

of these neurons, known as medium spiny neurons, are unlike any other neurons in the brain. Each one is linked to as many as 30,000 other neurons. And those linked neurons can be found throughout the cortex, the outer rind of the brain that handles much of the brain's most sophisticated information processing. Certain neurons come from regions that handle vision, others from areas that apply rules to what we perceive, and so on. By receiving so many signals from all over the brain, Meck believes, the medium spiny neurons give us a sense of time.

Imagine you are listening to a 10-second tone. At the beginning of the tone, neurons around your cortex reset themselves, so that they all begin to fire in sync. But some fire faster than others, and so at any moment some are active and some are quiet. From one moment to the next, a medium spiny neuron receives a unique pattern of signals from the neurons that link to it. The pattern changes like chords on a piano. When the 10 seconds are over, the medium spiny neuron can simply "listen" to the chord to tell how much time has passed.

Meck has found support for his model by recording the electrical activities of neurons and in other researchers' studies on people with a skewed sense of time. Certain neurotransmitters, such as dopamine, control pulsing neurons. Drugs such as cocaine and methamphetamine alter the brain by flooding it with dopamine, and studies have shown that they also change the second-to-second perception of time. In one experiment at UCLA, reported in 2007, scientists rang a bell after 53 seconds of silence. Healthy people estimated on average that 67 seconds had passed. Stimulant addicts guessed 91 seconds. Other drugs have the opposite effect on dopamine and compress the subjective experience of time.

Question:

Indentify the antonym of the word 'debonair' from the following options:

a. Stylish

b. Elegant

c. Gauche

d.Opulent

So now to answer this question first, indentify the word in the passage. It is used in 'But the brain does not then count the pulses in the way a clock does. Instead, Meck suspects, it does something more debonair. It listens to the pulses as if they were music'. If we read these sentences we will

get an idea that something positive is being talked about as a comparison with music is being done. So the word ‘debonair’ describes something better and nice. Thus when you have to find its antonym search for something negative and amongst the options only option C reflect the same as other options also indicate at something better and nice. Thus the answer is C.

Indentify the synonym of the word ‘skewed’ from the following options:

a. Regular

b. Uneven

c. Straight

d. Level

So herein also first, indentify the word in the passage. It is used in ‘Meck has found support for his model by recording the electrical activities of neurons and in other researchers’ studies on people with a skewed sense of time. Certain neurotransmitters, such as dopamine, control pulsing neurons’. When you need to, find the synonym try, to replace the options with the asked word in order to build up the same sense. The sentence talks about researching electrical activities of neurons on people which have a tipping sense of time in order to get best result. Thus only option B can fit in here as the rest options indicate balance. Thus the answer is B.

Questions on Homonyms are generally asked in the form of *fill in the blanks.* In order to solve them one needs to use their presence of mind and interpret the meaning of the sentence to fit in the word from the two same sounding words. For example if the sentence is:

1. He was kind enough to _____ to my request (accede/exceed)

Now if you will use your common sense it is quite obvious that no one will be kind enough to exceed the request. Thus here, the answer will be ‘accede’.

1. A good fellow will not _____ a friend in need (desert/dessert)

Dessert is something sweet so obviously the answer will be ‘desert’

Therefore, it is very easy to solve the questions on synonyms, antonyms and homonyms in the above mentioned manner and by using common interpretation skills.

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