Sentence Equivalence: trap synonyms

Sentence Equivalence gives you one sentence with a single blank, but each option. . .



Lesson `grev.se.E2`

Explore this live

Watch the walk-through

The idea

Sentence Equivalence gives you one sentence with a single blank, but each option is a PAIR of words, and a correct choice must pass two tests at once: both words must fit the sentence's meaning, and the two words must be near-synonyms, so that either one alone would produce essentially the same sentence. Solve it the way you solve any completion: read the sentence's logic, predict the meaning the blank needs, and note its...

? *Each option is a pair. What meaning and charge does the blank need, and which pair is both fitting AND synonymous?*

Predict the blank's meaning from the sentence's logic before reading options. Test every pair twice: do both words fit? are the two words near-synonyms? Reject any pair that fails either test.

Watch every step

Signal: 'far more than the lawyers had expected to extract' calls for a word meaning abundant. Need a synonymous, fitting pair.

The witness offered ___ detail — dates, names, overheard remarks — far more than the lawyers had expected to extract.

A. abundant and precise ✗ *fitting-but-not-synonymous*

B. copious and profuse

C. plentiful and scanty ✗ *single-word-trap*

D. meager and sparse ✗ *opposite-charge-pair*

E. brusque and curt ✗ *synonymous-but-ill-fitting*

Why B — "copious and profuse." Choose the one pair that passes both the fit test and the synonym test.

Now a harder one

Signal: 'a decade in prison for offenses that had once drawn a modest fine' calls for a word meaning harshly severe. Need a synonymous, fitting pair.

The new penalties were widely condemned as ___: a decade in prison for offenses that had once drawn a modest fine.

A. stringent and lenient ✗ *single-word-trap*

B. lax and permissive ✗ *opposite-charge-pair*

C. draconian and severe

D. prolix and verbose ✗ *synonymous-but-ill-fitting*

E. harsh and unprecedented ✗ *fitting-but-not-synonymous*

Why C — "draconian and severe." Choose the one pair that passes both the fit test and the synonym test.

The method, in one line

Sentence Equivalence: trap synonyms

Predict the blank's meaning from the sentence's logic before reading options. Test every pair twice: do both words fit? are the two words near-synonyms? Reject any pair that fails either test.

Would either word alone give the same sentence? If not, the pair is not equivalent. Does the shared meaning obey the sentence's signal and charge?

Watch out: two traps to dodge

⚠ synonymous-but-ill-fitting

The pair's two words are genuine synonyms of each other, but their shared meaning does not satisfy the sentence's logic, so the pair fails the fit test.

⚠ fitting-but-not-synonymous

Both words could plausibly complete the sentence, but they mean different things, so they are not interchangeable and the pair fails the synonym test.

Name the trap before you pick — most wrong answers are one of these two.

Try it, then watch the walk-through

Explore this live

Watch the walk-through