Text Completion: two competing signals

Harder single-blank sentences carry two clues, not one, and the second clue can. . .

Lesson grev.tc.C6

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The idea

Harder single-blank sentences carry two clues, not one, and the second clue can qualify, sharpen, or seem to pull against the first. The right word must satisfy both signals at once, so a word that answers only the nearest clue often fail the other.

What are the TWO signals in this sentence, and how must the blank answer to both at once?

Name both clues. Predict a word that reconciles them, then reject options that satisfy only the nearer clue and break the farther one.

Watch every step

Signal 1: 'quick and much enjoyed ... sparkling' marks cleverness. Signal 2: 'cruel ... left ... target ... stung' marks bite; the blank must be brilliant and cutting together.

Quick and much enjoyed, his wit had a ___ edge — sparkling and cruel at once — that left more than one target quietly stung.

- **A.** mordant
- **B.** pointed ✗ *over-reconciles*
- **C.** genial ✗ *nearest-clue-only*
- **D.** harmless ✗ *collapses-tension*
- **E.** verbal ✗ *topic-attractive*

Why **A** — "mordant." Choose the option that honors both signals simultaneously.

Now a harder one

Signal 1: 'praised his honesty' is positive. Signal 2: 'no regard for the feelings they crushed' is negative; the blank must be honesty carried to a wounding excess.

Admirers praised his honesty, but his candor could turn ___, blurting hard truths with no regard for the feelings they crushed.

A. loquacious ✗ *topic-attractive*

B. forthright ✗ *nearest-clue-only*

C. considerate ✗ *collapses-tension*

✓ **D.** tactless

E. direct ✗ *over-reconciles*

Why D — "tactless." Choose the option that honors both signals simultaneously.

The method, in one line

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Name both clues. Predict a word that reconciles them, then reject options that satisfy only the nearer clue and break the farther one.

Does my word obey the second clue as fully as the first? If the two clues seem to conflict, does my word capture the tension rather than collapse it to one side?

Watch out: two traps to dodge

⚠ nearest-clue-only

Selects a word that satisfies the closest or most obvious signal while ignoring or violating the second clue in the sentence.

⚠ collapses-tension

When two clues pull against each other, picks a one-sided word that answers one clue fully instead of the word that reconciles both.

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

Try it, then watch the walk-through

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