Vocabulary in context: precision among. . .

GRE vocabulary punishes approximate knowledge



Lesson `grev.vocab.V5`

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The idea

GRE vocabulary punishes approximate knowledge. Here every option is a near-synonym of the answer; only one matches the exact nuance the sentence builds.

What exact shade of meaning does the sentence build — deliberate or accidental, willful or impersonal, a state or an action, praising or faulting?

Predict the nuance in your own words before reading options; since all five are near-synonyms, eliminate by nuance, sense, register, and direction.

Watch every step

The new neighbor greeted everyone on the street warmly, quick with a smile and never short a kind word for a passing stranger.

Which word best captures the quality the sentence describes?

A. affable ✗ *near-synonym, imprecise nuance*

B. amicable ✗ *wrong-sense word*

C. amiable

D. gregarious ✗ *wrong connotation/register*

E. surly ✗ *antonym/contradicts context*

Why C — "amiable." Select the one word whose nuance matches the prediction exactly.

Now a harder one

She would not so much as glance at the tabloid, treating its gossip as beneath the notice of any serious mind and unworthy of a moment's attention.

Which word best captures the quality the sentence describes?

A. contempt ✗ *near-synonym, imprecise nuance*

B. reproach ✗ *wrong-sense word*

C. censure ✗ *wrong connotation/register*

D. admiration ✗ *antonym/contradicts context*

E. disdain

Why E — "disdain." Select the one word whose nuance matches the prediction exactly.

The method, in one line

Vocabulary in context: precision among near-synonyms, set 5

Predict the nuance in your own words before reading options; since all five are near-synonyms, eliminate by nuance, sense, register, and direction.

Would a second option 'sort of' work? Name what rules it out. The answer is the one you can defend against its nearest rival.

Watch out: two traps to dodge

⚠ near-synonym, imprecise nuance

Selects a true synonym whose nuance (willfulness, scope, or emphasis) misfits the context.

⚠ wrong-sense word

Selects a word whose alternate sense (state vs action, literal vs figurative) does not match the context.

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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