

Verbal Review

Measuring verbal ability—knowledge of words and reading comprehension—is one of the best ways to predict academic and vocational success, particularly for positions of leadership. The review sections that follow give you the information you need to score well on the verbal sections of the AFOQT and the ASTB tests.

Verbal Analogies

Verbal analogy tests measure your ability to reason and see relationships between words.

Practice Questions

Directions: Choose the answer that best completes the analogy developed at the beginning of each question.

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| <p>1. TOOL is to DRILL as POEM is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. SONGB. MACHINEC. SONNETD. BIRDE. NOVEL <p>2. TALK is to SHOUT as DISLIKE is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. SCREAMB. DETESTC. FRIGHTEND. CONTRIBUTEE. ADMIRE | <p>3. CONDUCTOR is to ORCHESTRA as SHEPHERD is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. FILMB. CANINEC. CONTROLD. FLOCKE. GENERAL <p>4. OBSTINATE is to COMPLIANT as OBLIVIOUS is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. CONSCIOUSB. CAREFREEC. FORGETFULD. INTUITIVEE. NATURAL |
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Answers and Explanations

- 1. C.** An example of a kind of tool is a drill, and an example of a kind of poem is a sonnet.
- 2. B.** To talk intensely is to shout, and to dislike intensely is to detest.
- 3. D.** The function of a conductor is to lead an orchestra, and the function of a shepherd is to lead a flock.
- 4. A.** The opposite of obstinate is compliant, and the opposite of oblivious is conscious.

Part I: Subject Area Review

Word Knowledge and Reading Comprehension

Word Knowledge appears on both the AFOQT exam and the ASTB exam. The formats of the exams differ slightly, however. On the AFOQT exam, you are given a word and then asked to find the synonym from five choices (A–E). On the ASTB exam, three different types of questions test your vocabulary knowledge. The first type of question is a sentence with a missing word, and you are asked to choose the missing word from among four choices (A–D). The second type of question is a little more complex. You are given a brief quotation that contains a word that is used incorrectly. You are asked to select, from a choice of five words, the word that would replace the incorrect word and would correctly convey the meaning of the quotation.

Word Knowledge

Let's look at the different question types. The first question is the type you will find on the AFOQT.

1. CIRCUMVENT

- A. get over
- B. go under
- C. get through
- D. go around
- E. go easily

The correct answer is **D**, go around. This type of question is not tricky. It requires, however, a strong vocabulary. (*circum* = around, *vent* = go). The AFOQT has a total of 25 questions of this type.

The second type of question is from the ASTB. The question consists of a sentence in which one word is omitted. Select the choice that best completes the sentence.

2. Paul was able to ____ the complainer with a look of contempt.

- A. squelch
- B. offend
- C. assail
- D. expel

The correct answer is **A**. To squelch is to silence. This satisfies the meaning of the sentence.

The final type of question is also from the ASTB and is a little more complex. The following quotation contains a word that has been misused. It is not in keeping with the meaning of the quotation. You must first determine which word is incorrect, and then select, from the choices given, the word that would be more appropriate for that quotation.

3. "Even while their components vary from culture to culture, rites of adulteration convey status in a new social grouping on the participants."

- A. maturity
- B. ceremony
- C. initiation
- D. consumption

The correct answer is **C**. The word *adulteration* is incorrect. It means to make something impure by adding a foreign substance. *Initiation*, which means the process of being admitted to something, fits the meaning of the sentence.

The first two types of questions really just require you to understand the vocabulary. This last section requires a little more thought on your part. You are required to first identify the word that is misused, and then substitute the correct word.

The ability tested in the Word Knowledge portion of the AFOQT and ASTB exams is your command of language—in other words—your vocabulary. Of course, by this point in your life, you might think that you have learned all the words you will ever learn or that it is impossible to improve your vocabulary. On the contrary! If you are diligent and put your mind to it, you can improve your vocabulary in several ways. The following are three ways that definitely help:

1. Read, read, read. Pick up a newspaper, a magazine or a novel and make note of words you do not understand. Make a list or put them on note cards. First, try to figure out the meaning of the words by looking at the context in which they are used. Make an educated guess. If you are still not sure, look up the meaning of the words in a dictionary and write them out in a notebook or on note cards. Then try to make up your own sentences using the words.
2. Learn a new word every day or every other day. You can get into the habit of looking up a new word in the dictionary every day. Write out the word and its definition on a piece of paper. Then write out a sentence using the word. This helps you visualize it. Don't pick words that are too technical or specialized (such as medical/scientific terms or proper names). Try using this new word in conversation.
3. Words are made up, generally, of prefixes, roots and suffixes. Many prefixes and roots have a Latin or Greek origin. If you can familiarize yourself with some of these, you can arrive at the meaning of some words by breaking them down. The following section offers you some common prefixes, roots and suffixes to help you tackle words you are unfamiliar with in the Word Knowledge section.

Prefixes

To break down words you do not understand or to help you recognize why a word means what it means, you should become familiar with prefixes. Prefixes come at the beginning of words and can affect their meaning.

As an example, let's look at the word *synonym*. This word is made up of the prefix *syn* plus the root *nym*. If you know that the prefix *syn* means *with/together* or *same*, and that the root *nym* means *name* or *word*, you can conclude that the word *synonym* means *same word*. And that's what it means!

Let's look at another example. The word *circumvent* is made up of the prefix *circum* plus the root *vent*. If you know that the prefix *circum* means *around*, and that the root *vent* means *go* or *come*, you can conclude that the word *circumvent* means *go around*.

What follows is a list of common prefixes that are often found at the beginning of certain words. Following the prefix is the meaning of the prefix and a word using the prefix (with a rough definition in parentheses following the word). Try including a word of your own in the space provided for each prefix. If you cannot come up with your own word, refer to a dictionary for help.

Prefix	Meaning	Word (Definition)	Your Example
ab-	away from	abnormal (away from normal)	
ad-	to, toward	adjoin (join to)	
a-, an-	not, without	apathy (without feeling)	
anti-	against	antiviolence (against violence)	

(continued)

Part I: Subject Area Review

Prefix	Meaning	Word (Definition)	Your Example
ambi-	both	ambidextrous (both hands)	
bene-	good	benign (good or harmless)	
circum-	around	circumvent (go around)	
con-	with, together	connect (come together)	
contra-	against	contradict (speak against)	
com-	with, together	communion (coming together)	
de-	down, away	descend (move down)	
dis-	apart, not	discontent (not content)	
e-	out of, from	eject (throw out)	
ex-	out of, from	exclude (leave out)	
hyper-	over	hyperactive (overactive)	
hypo-	under	hypodermic (below the skin)	
inter-	between	interconnected (connected between)	
il-	not	illegal (not legal)	
in-	not	indiscreet (not discreet)	
in-	into	ingest (take into the body by mouth)	
im-	not	impossible (not possible)	
im-	into	imbibe (drink in)	
ir-	not	irrational (not rational)	
mal-	bad, evil	malign (speak badly of)	
ob-	against	obstruct (build against)	
omni-	all	omniscient (knows all)	
peri-	around	periscope (view around)	
post-	after	postgraduate (after graduation)	
pre-	before	precede (go before)	
pro-	for, forward	proceed (move forward)	
re-	again, back	reconvene (get together again)	
retro-	back	retrogression (step back)	
se-	away from	seduce (lead away)	

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Prefix	Meaning	Word (Definition)	Your Example
sub-	under	subhuman (below human)	
sur-, super-	over, above	supersonic (above sound)	
sym-, syn-	together, with	sympathy (feeling with or for)	
trans-	across	transatlantic (across the Atlantic)	

Roots

Along with prefixes, roots are central to the meanings of words. If you familiarize yourself with some common roots, you might be able to better recognize certain words or at least get a general feel for several words. By studying the following list of roots, you will be better equipped to break down many words and make sense of them!

Following is a list of roots, their meanings, a word using the root, and a space in which you can write a brief definition in your own words.

Root	Meaning	Word	Your Definition
ami, amic	love	amicable	
anthrop	human, man	anthropology	
arch	chief or leader	patriarch	
auto	self	autobiography	
aud	sound	audible	
brev	short	brief	
bio	life	biography	
cap	take, seize	capture	
ced	yield, go	intercede	
corp	body	corporal	
cred	believe	credible	
culp	guilt	culpable	
chron	time	synchronize	
crac, crat	rule, ruler	democracy	
dic	speak, say	dictate	
duc, duct	lead	deduce	
demo	people	democracy	
equ	equal	equity	

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Part I: Subject Area Review

Root	Meaning	Word	Your Definition
grad, gress	step	progression	
graph	writing, printing	biography	
ject	throw	inject	
luc	light	elucidate	
log	study of	geology	
mono	one	monotone	
man	hand	manual	
min	small	minority	
mit, miss	send	emit	
mort	death	mortal	
mut	change	mutate	
nym	word or name	pseudonym	
nov	new	renovate	
pac	peace	pacify	
pel, puls	push	compel	
pot	power	potent	
port	carry	portable	
path	feeling	apathy	
phil	like, lover of	philosophy	
quer, quis	ask	query	
scrib	write	manuscript	
sed	sit	sedentary	
sent	feel	sensory	
sequ	follow	sequel	
son	sound	unison	
spir	breathe	inspire	
tang, tact	touch	tangible	
vac	empty	vacant	
ven	come, go	intervene	
ver	truth	verify	
vert	turn	introvert	

Root	Meaning	Word	Your Definition
vit	life	revitalize	
voc	call	evocative	

Suffixes

Suffixes come at the end of words and usually change the part of speech (noun, adjective, adverb and so on) of words, which also subtly changes the meaning. Becoming familiar with suffixes might help you get a sense of the meaning the word is *conveying*, even if you are not sure of what the definition of the word is exactly.

Let's look at a word with different suffixes to see how the part of speech or the meaning can change. For example, the word *sedate* means to *calm* or *relax*. The following sentences contain words that are made up of the root word *sedate* but have different suffixes attached to the end:

The doctor prescribed a *sedative* [something that sedates] to calm her nerves.

The speech was delivered *sedately* [in a sedate manner].

The dog was under *sedation* [in a state of sedation] for the long trip.

Many office workers live a *sedentary* [relating to nonactivity] lifestyle.

As you can see, in each of the sentences, the word *sedate* means generally the same thing, but the part of speech changes. However, you can get a sense of *how* the word changes if you know what the suffix means.

What follows is a list of common suffixes that you might encounter at the ends of certain words. Try applying these suffixes at the ends of words you know (or words from the preceding lists) to see how the part of speech or the meaning of the word changes.

Suffix	Meaning	Your Example
-able, ible	capable of or susceptible to	
-ary	of or relating to	
-ate	to make	
-ian	one relating to or belonging to	
-ic	relating to or characterized by	
-ile	relating to or capable of	
-ion	action or condition of	
-ious	having the quality of	
-ism	quality, process or practice of	
-ist	one who performs	
-ity	state of being	
-ive	performing or tending to	
-ize, ise	to cause to be or become	
-ly	resembling or in the manner of	

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Part I: Subject Area Review

Suffix	Meaning	Your Example
-less	without	
-ment	action or process or the result	
-ology	study of	
-y, -ry	state of	

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension questions appear on both the AFOQT and the ASTB. A variety of different question types appear, but the essential element of all the question types involves reading a passage carefully and answering questions based *only* on the information included.

Practice Questions

For questions 1–4, choose the answer that means the same as the capitalized word.

1. GRAPHIC

- A. unclear
- B. detailed
- C. large
- D. childish

2. INDISPENSABLE

- A. trashy
- B. ridiculous
- C. necessary
- D. uninvited

3. CONCOCT

- A. make up
- B. throw away
- C. go through
- D. walk around

4. SONIC

- A. relating to the sun
- B. relating to the moon
- C. relating to sound
- D. relating to the earth

Questions 5–8 consist of sentences in which one word is omitted. For each question, select the lettered choice that best completes the thought expressed in the sentence.

5. The committee voted to ____ the membership requirements, but the board of directors overruled the vote, and the requirements remained in place.

- A. consider
- B. remember
- C. rescind
- D. enhance

6. He tried to budget his funds, but his ____ for gambling led him into debt.

- A. talent
- B. predilection
- C. consideration
- D. distaste

7. After the cake collapsed in the oven, the cook decided the recipe needed to be ____.

- A. increased
- B. fermented
- C. consolidated
- D. amended

8. Pouring water on burning grease does not put out the fire; instead, it ____ the danger.

- A. quenches
- B. improves
- C. exacerbates
- D. expiates

Questions 9–12 consist of quotations containing one word that is incorrectly used, and is not in keeping with the meaning that each quotation is evidently intended to convey. Determine which word is incorrectly used. Then select from the lettered choices the word that, when substituted for the incorrectly used word, best helps to convey the intended meaning of the quotation.

- 9.** “When a reader tells me my novel makes a political statement, I am distressed, because such a remark complies literature with propaganda.”
- A. corrupts
 - B. communicates
 - C. compares
 - D. confounds
- 10.** “His baseball-oriented parents, his work ethic, and his reluctant competitive nature made it possible for Cal Ripken, Jr., the best shortstop of his era, to break the record for consecutive games played.”
- A. relentless
 - B. persuasive
 - C. moderate
 - D. contest
- 11.** “Applicants for insurance disclose personal information to our company; state and federal laws regulate the uses of this information for any purpose, and therefore we instruct our employees to understand the importance of restraining the confidentiality of personal information supplied by you to our company.”
- A. permitting
 - B. maintaining
 - C. complicating
 - D. forwarding
- 12.** “Arguments, in the academic sense of the term, provide a device for exploring a controversy or dispute, a tool for isolating issues in contention, and a way to evaluate different possible outcomes; furthermore, they shape and mangle each arguer’s position.”
- A. manipulate
 - B. clarify
 - C. reply
 - D. obscure

Questions 13–16 require you to answer each question on the basis of the information contained in the accompanying quotation or passage. The AFOQT questions have five choices; the ASTB has four.

- 13.** “Careful designing that complements the lot and the house as well as the planting of shrubs and trees in the proper season will guarantee successful landscaping and increase the curb appeal for a house on the market.”
- The preceding quotation best supports the statement that appearance of one’s property
- A. can make or break the potential sale of a house
 - B. depends on how many shrubs and trees are planted
 - C. should be improved to enhance property when a house is for sale
 - D. depends on a talented horticulturist and a landscape architect
- 14.** Panthers refer to two different types of animals—the leopard and the concolour. Concolours are called by many other names: Cougar, puma, mountain lion, and panther are just a few. In fact, the panther has more dictionary names than any other known predator.
- Which of the following is *not* mentioned as another name for the concolour?
- A. cougar
 - B. mountain lion
 - C. bobcat
 - D. panther
 - E. puma

Part I: Subject Area Review

15. Thomas Alva Edison is one of the most well-known inventors in history. He is most famous for inventions like the phonograph, the motion picture camera and the light bulb. However, even Edison failed in a few attempts at invention, namely in trying to develop a better way to mine iron ore during the late 1880s and early 1890s. He was tenacious in his attempts to find a method that worked, but he eventually gave up after having lost all the money he had invested in iron ore mining projects.

This passage is mainly about

- A. Edison's successful inventions
- B. the light bulb
- C. iron ore mining
- D. Edison's foolish inventions
- E. Edison's invention attempt in iron ore mining

16. In an age that stresses the importance of water conservation, many plants exist that require less water than other more traditionally grown plants. To optimize water usage efficiency, experts recommend watering such plants during the cooler times of the day.

One can conclude from the preceding statements that water-efficient plants should be watered

- A. at 12:00 noon, when the sun is at its hottest
- B. at 6:00 a.m. when the sun has just risen
- C. at 10:00 a.m. when the day is warming up
- D. at 3:00 p.m. before the sun goes down
- E. at 6:00 a.m. and at 3:00 p.m.

Answers and Explanations

1. **B.** *Graphic* (graph = written or drawn) means described in vivid detail or clearly drawn out, so *detailed* would most closely mean *graphic*.
2. **C.** *Indispensable* literally means not dispensable (able to be thrown away). So if something is *indispensable*, it is necessary; you cannot do away with it.
3. **A.** *Concoct* means to create or come up with, like in the sentence, “The two boys concocted a plan to skip school.” *Concoct* most closely means *to make up*.
4. **C.** *Sonic* means *relating to sound* (son = sound).
5. **C.** The word *rescind* means to repeal, or to revoke.
6. **B.** The word *predilection* means inclination toward, or preference for.
7. **D.** The word *amended* means changed.
8. **C.** The word *exacerbate* means to make worse, or to increase the severity.
9. **D.** The word *complies* is incorrect. The writer is distressed, so the quotation intends to convey the idea that literature should not be thought of as propaganda. *Confounds*, which means fails to distinguish between, best expresses the sentence’s meaning.
10. **A.** The word *reluctant* is incorrect. A reluctant person is unwilling to do something. *Relentless*, which means steady and persistent, describes the kind of person who could break a record.
11. **B.** The word *restraining* is incorrect because to restrain means to put limits on. The quotation is intended to reassure people that information will be kept confidential. Therefore, *maintaining* is the word that would convey the intended meaning.
12. **B.** The word *mangle*, meaning to ruin, is incorrect. The quotation is about the advantages of argument. Replacing *mangle* with *clarify* expresses that idea.
13. **C.** **A** is incorrect because it is too extreme; the quotation does not indicate that a lack of landscaping prevents the sale of a house. **B** is wrong because the passage does not reveal how many plants are called for; no number is required. **D** is incorrect because the quotation does not include a requirement for professional assistance.
14. **C.** The only name not listed in the paragraph as another name for the concolour is bobcat.
15. **E.** The third sentence states that Edison had a few failed inventions, and the rest of the selection elaborates on the iron ore mining invention attempt.
16. **B.** The selection states that such plants should be watered during the cooler parts of the day. Choice **B**, 6:00 a.m., is the coolest time of day listed.

