Comprehensive Drill: Module 1

Now put it all together. Here are twenty Words in Context questions at Module 1 level, mixed the way the test mixes them: restatements, contrasts, causes and effects, examples, negatives, and phrases that end in a small word like *of* or *by*. Each one is built on an official question, with a twist that the answers will reveal. Work every question through the three steps: Find the clue, Predict, Match. Say your prediction to yourself before you look at the choices, and reread the whole text with your choice in the blank before you move on. These questions are short, so aim for about 48 seconds each: 16 minutes for the set.

Question 1

Hoping to attract more applicants from low-income families, a growing number of colleges now _____ their application fees for students who qualify for need-based financial aid, so that for those students, applying costs nothing at all.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) raise — *increase*
B) concede — *admit; give up to an opponent*
C) waive — *set aside; choose not to require*
D) reduce — *make smaller or lower*

Question 2

Grape growers along New York's Finger Lakes owe much of their success to the lakes themselves, which _____ the region's climate: because deep water warms and cools far more slowly than land, the lakes give off stored heat in autumn, delaying the first frost, and stay cold in spring, holding back the buds until the danger of a late freeze has passed.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) intensify — *make stronger or more extreme*
B) moderate — *make less extreme*
C) indulge — *give in to (a wish or a person)*
D) chill — *make cold*

Question 3

Florists often add a packet of flower food to the water to _____ the vase life of cut flowers. The packet contains sugar, which feeds the blooms, and a small amount of a biocide, which slows the growth of bacteria that would otherwise clog the stems and cause the flowers to wilt early.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) restore — *bring back to an earlier condition*
B) rectify — *correct (a mistake or a wrong)*
C) measure — *find the size or amount of*
D) prolong — *make last longer*

Question 4

Southern pied babblers, birds that live in groups in the Kalahari Desert of southern Africa, depend on _____ to stay safe: while most members of a group search the ground for insects, one bird perches in a tree to watch for hawks and other predators, singing steadily to let the others know it is on duty and giving an alarm call the moment danger appears.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) vigilance — *careful watchfulness for danger*
B) consensus — *general agreement within a group*
C) camouflage — *coloring or covering that helps hide*
D) isolation — *being alone or cut off from others*

Question 5

To many English speakers, the phrase "jumbo shrimp" sounds like _____: "jumbo," a word that became popular after a famously enormous circus elephant named Jumbo, means very large, while "shrimp" has long been used to mean a very small person or thing.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) an exaggeration — *an overstatement*
B) a translation — *a version in another language*
C) a contradiction — *a pairing of ideas that clash*
D) an analogy — *a comparison based on likeness*

Question 6

In 1847, the Hungarian physician Ignaz Semmelweis began requiring doctors on a Vienna maternity ward to wash their hands in a chlorine solution before examining patients, and deaths from childbed fever there fell sharply. Yet many physicians rejected his conclusion that unwashed hands had been spreading the disease, and the idea was not fully _____ until the 1860s and 1870s, when the work of Louis Pasteur and Joseph Lister helped show that germs cause infection.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) validated — *confirmed as true or sound*
B) abandoned — *given up completely*
C) created — *brought into being*
D) simplified — *made easier or less complex*

Question 7

A baseball outfielder's knowledge of how to catch a fly ball is largely _____. Research suggests that skilled fielders reach the right spot by running so that, from where they stand, the ball appears to rise at a steady rate, yet few fielders can describe this strategy or even know that they use it.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) conscious — *aware; deliberate*
B) irrelevant — *unrelated to the matter at hand*
C) inaccurate — *not correct*
D) implicit — *understood or used without being stated*

Question 8

Polygraph tests, popularly called lie detectors, are far from _____. Because a polygraph records signs of nervousness, such as a racing pulse and sweaty palms, rather than lying itself, a calm liar can sometimes pass the test, while an anxious person telling the truth can fail it.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) atypical — *not typical; unusual*
B) fallible — *capable of making mistakes*
C) infallible — *incapable of error*
D) portable — *easy to carry*

Question 9

The flower color of many bigleaf hydrangeas is _____ by the soil they grow in: in acidic soil, which lets the plants take up aluminum, their blossoms turn blue, while in alkaline soil the same plants produce pink ones.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) reduced — *made smaller or weaker*
B) determined — *decided or controlled*
C) unaffected — *not changed or influenced*
D) concealed — *hidden*

Question 10

When the city council voted to pay the rent of the town's last movie theater for one more year, the theater's owners called the decision _____, though they warned that unless ticket sales improved, the doors would close for good once the year was up.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) a reprieve — *a temporary relief from something bad*
B) a defeat — *a loss; a failure*
C) an oddity — *something strange*
D) a premiere — *a first public showing*

Question 11

Paleontologists have long found the Tully monster _____. Since its fossils were first discovered in Illinois in the 1950s, researchers have argued over what kind of animal this roughly 300-million-year-old creature was: with its eyes set at either end of a stiff crossbar and a toothed claw at the tip of a long snout, it has been placed at different times among the worms, the mollusks, and the fishes.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) recognizable — *easy to identify*
B) fearsome — *frightening*
C) fragile — *easily broken*
D) intriguing — *arousing curiosity*

Question 12

Because American chestnut trees had never encountered the fungus that causes chestnut blight, they were highly _____ it: after the disease, introduced from Asia, was first detected in New York in 1904, it killed billions of chestnut trees across the eastern United States within about fifty years.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) accustomed to — *used to*
B) susceptible to — *easily affected or harmed by*
C) saturated with — *completely filled or soaked with*
D) prized for — *valued for*

Question 13

People do not judge the _____ of a smile by the mouth alone. Psychologists have found that a smile is more likely to be read as genuine when it also narrows the eyes and crinkles the skin at their outer corners; a smile that moves only the lips can look forced.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) width — *how wide something is*
B) esteem — *respect; high regard*
C) sincerity — *genuineness; honesty*
D) frequency — *how often something happens*

Question 14

When the team lined up to punt on fourth down and then threw a long pass instead, the stunned crowd assumed that the play was a desperate improvisation. In fact, it was entirely _____: the coaches had designed the fake punt weeks earlier and had the players rehearse it in practice, waiting for the right moment to use it.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) haphazard — *random; unplanned*
B) illegal — *against the law or rules*
C) successful — *achieving its aim*
D) premeditated — *planned in advance*

Question 15

A remora is a fish that attaches itself to a larger animal, such as a shark, by means of a suction disk on top of its head. Riding along, the remora saves the energy it would otherwise spend swimming and can feed on scraps from its host's meals, so it is the main _____ the arrangement; the shark, by most accounts, gains little from it.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) victim of — *one harmed by*
B) beneficiary of — *one who gains from*
C) proponent of — *one who argues in favor of*
D) obstacle to — *something that blocks*

Question 16

Planetary scientists value the discovery of water ice in permanently shadowed craters near the Moon's poles mainly for its _____: even a modest supply of ice there could one day give astronauts drinking water and the raw material for rocket fuel, making a long-term base on the Moon far more practical.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) implications — *possible consequences*
B) scale — *size or extent*
C) drawbacks — *disadvantages*
D) age — *how old something is*

Question 17

When the snow melts early in spring, a snowshoe hare's white winter coat is hardly _____: against the bare brown ground, the white animal stands out sharply, making it an easy target for lynxes, coyotes, and owls.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) seasonal — *tied to a season*
B) conspicuous — *easy to notice*
C) rudimentary — *basic; undeveloped*
D) advantageous — *helpful; beneficial*

Question 18

In many desert annual plants, germination is _____ chemicals in the seeds' own coats. Until a soaking rain washes these compounds away, the seeds stay dormant, so they do not sprout after a light shower that could not supply enough water for a seedling to survive.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) hastened by — *sped up by*
B) contingent on — *dependent on*
C) inhibited by — *held back by*
D) measured by — *assessed or quantified by*

Question 19

Under the principle of informed consent, a doctor ordinarily may not perform a medical procedure unless the patient is _____ its risks: the doctor must explain what could go wrong, and the patient must understand that explanation before agreeing to go ahead.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) subjected to — *made to undergo*
B) apprised of — *informed of*
C) receptive to — *willing to consider; open to*
D) shielded from — *protected from*

Question 20

Geologists who study earthquake hazards in southern California have taken a special interest in the _____ of certain boulders. Perched on narrow pedestals of rock, these boulders would topple in strong shaking, so the fact that some have stood for thousands of years helps scientists set limits on how violent past earthquakes near them could have been.

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

A) precariousness — *dangerous instability*
B) weathering — *breakdown of rock by weather*
C) exactitude — *precision; exactness*
D) composition — *what something is made of*