

# CAT VOCABULARY

Advanced Practice Paper — High-Yield Verbal Ability & Reading Comprehension (VARC)

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## PART I: QUESTIONS

Question 1    Difficulty: Easy    Sub-topic: Vocabulary in Context

The central bank's decision to lower interest rates was not an act of desperation, but a calculated move to inject liquidity into a **moribund** credit market that had been frozen since the collapse of the tech conglomerate.

Choose the word that best captures the contextual meaning of the bolded word:

- (A) Flourishing
- (B) Volatile
- (C) Stagnant
- (D) Nascent

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Question 2    Difficulty: Easy    Sub-topic: Synonyms

The author's argument is built on a series of **specious** premises that appear perfectly logical at first glance but disintegrate under rigorous philosophical scrutiny.

Identify the closest synonym for the bolded word in this context:

- (A) Fallacious
  - (B) Incontrovertible
  - (C) Astute
  - (D) Intricate
-

Question 3    Difficulty: Easy    Sub-topic: Antonyms

While the legacy systems of the traditional banking sector are notoriously rigid, fintech startups pride themselves on their highly **malleable** infrastructure, which can adapt instantly to regulatory changes.

Identify the word that is most nearly opposite in meaning to the bolded word:

- (A) Pliant
  - (B) Refractory
  - (C) Amorphous
  - (D) Resilient
- 

Question 4    Difficulty: Easy    Sub-topic: One-Word Substitutions

Many modern digital platforms survive on corporate models that extract value without giving back, displaying a structural approach that exists by feeding off a host ecosystem while contributing nothing to its long-term viability.

Which of the following terms best fits this description?

- (A) Symbiotic
  - (B) Parasitic
  - (C) Mutualistic
  - (D) Commensal
- 

Question 5    Difficulty: Easy    Sub-topic: Idioms & Phrases

When the retail giant attempted to enter the highly localized artisanal market, they found themselves **at sea** because they failed to comprehend the nuanced shifting preferences of rural consumer cohorts.

What does the phrase "at sea" mean in this sentence?

- (A) Dominant and highly secure
  - (B) Fully prepared and dynamic
  - (C) Completely bewildered or lost
  - (D) Financially overleveraged
-

Question 6    Difficulty: Medium    Sub-topic: Word Usage

Choose the option that indicates the sentences where the word **COMPRISE** has been used correctly.

1. The international trade committee is comprised of representatives from over twelve developing countries.
2. Diverse technological frameworks comprise the overarching architecture of the smart city platform.
3. The venture capital portfolio comprises five biotech startups and three renewable energy firms.
4. Individual historical properties comprise the cultural heritage conservation zone of the old town.

- (A) 1 and 4
  - (B) 2 and 3
  - (C) 1, 2, and 3
  - (D) 2, 3, and 4
- 

Question 7    Difficulty: Medium    Sub-topic: Confusing Word Pairs

The sudden deployment of defensive military personnel along the border was expected to \_\_\_\_\_ an aggressive diplomatic response from the neighboring state, forcing the UN to \_\_\_\_\_ international mediation immediately.

Choose the pair of words that correctly completes the blanks:

- (A) elicit / illicit
  - (B) illicit / elicit
  - (C) elicit / solicit
  - (D) solicit / elicit
- 

Question 8    Difficulty: Medium    Sub-topic: Contextual Meaning

The board of directors found the manager's presentation to be exceptionally **trenchant**, as it cleanly cut through layers of corporate jargon to highlight the structural flaws threatening their supply chains.

The word *trenchant* most closely matches the meaning of which word in this context?

- (A) Incoherent
  - (B) Incisive
  - (C) Verbose
  - (D) Conciliatory
-

Question 9    Difficulty: Medium    Sub-topic: Collocations

The macroeconomic analyst noted that while temporary subsidies provide short-term relief, they cannot solve structural economic recessions unless the government addresses the \_\_\_\_\_ causes of systemic unemployment.

Choose the word that forms the most natural and standard academic collocation with "causes":

- (A) underlying
  - (B) bottoming
  - (C) subterranean
  - (D) lower
- 

Question 10    Difficulty: Medium    Sub-topic: Analogies (CAT-level)

**EPHEMERAL : PERMANENCE**

Identify the pair that reflects a structural and logical relationship most similar to the one given above:

- (A) Garrulous : Loquacity
  - (B) Mercenary : Benevolence
  - (C) Indigent : Poverty
  - (D) Lucid : Clarity
- 

Question 11    Difficulty: Medium    Sub-topic: Vocabulary in Context

Anthropologists argue that the rapid introduction of digital communication platforms has catalyzed a deep cultural breakdown, converting cohesive communities into a fragmented collection of **atomized** individuals who lack shared social obligations.

The word *atomized* implies that individuals have become:

- (A) Empowered by technological agency
  - (B) Radically isolated from social structures
  - (C) Uniformly integrated into global networks
  - (D) Highly explosive in political alignment
-

Question 12

Difficulty: Medium

Sub-topic: Synonyms

The CEO's **mercurial** temperament kept the executive team in a constant state of anxiety, as strategic goals embraced with enthusiasm one morning were often discarded with contempt by late afternoon.

The closest contextual synonym for the bolded word is:

- (A) Capricious
  - (B) Phlegmatic
  - (C) Steadfast
  - (D) Magnanimous
- 

Question 13

Difficulty: Medium

Sub-topic: Antonyms

The scientific community praised the monograph for its exhaustive documentation, noting that the researcher's **fastidious** attention to data verification left absolutely no room for experimental error.

The word most nearly opposite in meaning to *fastidious* is:

- (A) Meticulous
  - (B) Negligent
  - (C) Scrupulous
  - (D) Discriminating
- 

Question 14

Difficulty: Medium

Sub-topic: Idioms & Phrases

By refusing to compromise on minor intellectual property clauses, the lead negotiator came dangerously close to **cutting off his nose to spite his face**, risking a multi-billion-dollar trade alliance over a trivial legal dispute.

This idiom indicates that the negotiator was:

- (A) Actively sabotaging a competitor at immense personal cost
  - (B) Exhibiting a self-destructive reaction out of pique or anger
  - (C) Demonstrating exceptional analytical precision under duress
  - (D) Demanding structural accountability from his own legal team
-

Question 15

Difficulty: Medium

Sub-topic: One-Word Substitutions

In legal philosophy, an unwritten but universally recognized standard or principle that is accepted as inherently just and binding by virtue of human nature and reason, independent of any formal statutory legislation, is known as:

- (A) Positive Law
  - (B) Natural Law
  - (C) Tort Law
  - (D) Administrative Decree
- 

Question 16

Difficulty: Hard

Sub-topic: Word Usage

Choose the option that accurately indicates the sentences where the word **QUALIFY** has been used correctly.

1. To protect her academic credibility, the historian had to qualify her thesis by noting that the archival evidence was limited to urban centers.
2. The athletic commission ruled that the sprinter's record-breaking performance would qualify him for the championship final.
3. After receiving updated fiscal data, the economist felt compelled to qualify his optimistic GDP projections with severe caveats.
4. The defense attorney attempted to qualify the witness's absolute statements by introducing evidence of partial vision impairment.

- (A) 2 and 3 only
  - (B) 1, 2, and 3 only
  - 1, 3, and 4 only
  - (D) 1, 2, 3, and 4
-

Question 17

Difficulty: Hard

Sub-topic: Vocabulary in Context

For decades, the totalitarian regime maintained structural control through the systematic use of state media, propagating an all-encompassing narrative that served to **obfuscate** the reality of economic collapse and widespread social unrest.

The word *obfuscate* is used to show that the regime wanted to:

- (A) Deliberately cloud and complicate public understanding
  - (B) Objectively document historical socioeconomic changes
  - (C) Unintentionally streamline administrative communication channels
  - (D) Systematically dismantle alternative political opposition
- 

Question 18

Difficulty: Hard

Sub-topic: Analogies (CAT-level)

**SOPORIFIC : ALERTNESS**

Identify the pair that exhibits the same underlying logical relationship as the capitalized pair:

- (A) Corrosive : Destruction
  - (B) Anodyne : Pain
  - (C) Stimulant : Energy
  - (D) Catalyst : Equilibrium
- 

Question 19

Difficulty: Hard

Sub-topic: Confusing Word Pairs

The environmental board's ruling was entirely \_\_\_\_\_, lacking any objective basis in environmental safety data; yet, its immediate impact was to \_\_\_\_\_ a sudden, sharp downturn in real estate investment across the coastal region.

Choose the option that accurately fills both blanks:

- (A) arbitrary / precipitate
  - (B) discretionary / participate
  - (C) arbitrary / perpetuate
  - (D) authoritarian / contextualize
-

Post-structuralist critics often observe that language is not a transparent mirror of reality, but a highly unstable medium where meanings are continuously **deferred**, preventing any absolute consensus on the ultimate intent of a literary text.

The word *deferred* in this specific theoretical context most precisely means:

- (A) Respectfully submitted to an established institutional authority
  - (B) Expanded to include broader cross-cultural historical perspectives
  - (C) Postponed endlessly along an ongoing chain of linguistic references
  - (D) Eliminated entirely to establish structural, functional clarity
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## PART II: ANSWER KEY & DETAILED SOLUTIONS

### Q1. Correct Answer: (C)

**Meaning of the key word:** *Moribund* means being in a dying state, approaching death, or lacking vitality and moving toward stagnation.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** The passage states that the credit market was "frozen" since a corporate collapse. Therefore, the central bank is injecting liquidity to revive a market that is inactive or dying. "Stagnant" perfectly fits this contextual clue.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- (A) *Flourishing* is a direct antonym, meaning thriving.
- (B) *Volatile* means highly unstable or changing rapidly, which contradicts "frozen."
- (D) *Nascent* means just coming into existence, whereas this market already existed and collapsed.

**CAT Elimination Technique:** Use punctuation and conjunction markers. The phrase "but a calculated move to inject liquidity into a... market that had been frozen" creates an explicit definition loop. Frozen = Stagnant.

### Q2. Correct Answer: (A)

**Meaning of the key word:** *Specious* describes something that looks correct, attractive, or plausible on the surface but is actually false, deceptive, or structurally flawed.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** The context states that the premises "appear perfectly logical at first glance but disintegrate under rigorous... scrutiny." This matches the definition of "fallacious" (based on a mistaken belief or unsound argument).

**Why other options are wrong:**

- (B) *Incontrovertible* means indisputable, which is the exact opposite.
- (C) *Astute* means clever or sharp, typically applied to people.
- (D) *Intricate* means complex, which does not capture the deceptive nature of the premises.

**Vocabulary Shortcut:** Look for structural concessions like "appear X but turn out to be Y". The word *specious* is a classic CAT favorite used to describe misleading arguments.

**Q3. Correct Answer: (B)**

**Meaning of the key word:** *Malleable* means capable of being extended, shaped, or altered by outside pressure; pliant or highly adaptable.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** The sentence sets up a contrast between traditional banking platforms ("notoriously rigid") and fintech startups ("highly malleable"). The antonym must mean resistant to being shaped or stubborn. *Refractory* means stubborn, unmanageable, or resistant to change or heat, making it the best antonym.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- (A) *Pliant* is a synonym.
- (C) *Amorphous* means lacking a definite form, which is closer to a synonym than an antonym.
- (D) *Resilient* means able to recover quickly, which matches the positive tone of adaptability.

**Memory Tip:** *Refractory elements resist heat and maintain their shape under immense stress. In behavioral contexts, a refractory person or system refuses to bend.*

**Q4. Correct Answer: (B)**

**Meaning of the key word:** *Parasitic* refers to an organism or system that lives over, in, or on a host, deriving benefits by directly exploiting the host while giving nothing in return.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** The question text outlines a business model that "extracts value without giving back" and lives by "feeding off a host ecosystem while contributing nothing." This describes a parasitic relationship.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- (A) *Symbiotic* is a broad term for living together, but often implies mutual benefit in common parlance.
- (C) *Mutualistic* means both parties benefit equally.
- (D) *Commensal* means one benefits while the other is completely unaffected (neither helped nor harmed).

**Key Skill Tested:** *Precision in distinguishing scientific gradations of systemic interaction within corporate analogies.*

**Q5. Correct Answer: (C)**

**Meaning of the key word:** The idiom *at sea* means to be completely confused, lost, bewildered, or unable to decide what to do next.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** The retail giant failed to understand rural consumer cohorts. As a result, they were lost and confused in the new market environment.

**Why other options are wrong:** (A), (B), and (D) fail to align with the negative constraint introduced by the clause "because they failed to comprehend."

*Elimination Shortcut:* "Failed to comprehend" indicates a state of cognitive lack or strategic confusion. Eliminate any positive or purely financial option.

**Q6. Correct Answer: (D)**

**Meaning of the key word:** *Comprise* means "to include, contain, or consist of." A crucial rule of premium syntax is that the whole comprises its parts; individual parts *compose* or *constitute* the whole. Furthermore, the phrase "is comprised of" is generally considered an incorrect construction in formal contexts.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:**

- Sentence 1 uses "is comprised of," which is structurally incorrect (it should be "is composed of").
- Sentence 3 follows the standard rule perfectly: Whole = Portfolio (comprises) Parts = startups.
- Sentences 2 and 4 represent a reversed usage (parts comprise whole) that is common in modern corporate and descriptive usage, but completely free from the absolute error found in 1.

Since sentence 1 is an absolute syntactic error, any option containing 1 must be eliminated. This removes options A and C. Between B and D, sentences 2 and 4 use the exact same direction, meaning they must stand or fall together, pointing directly to Option D.

**Q7. Correct Answer: (C)**

**Meaning of the key words:** *Elicit* means to draw out, evoke, or provoke a reaction. *Illicit* is an adjective meaning illegal or forbidden. *Solicit* means to request, entreat, or petition for something.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** The first blank requires a verb meaning to provoke a response ("elicit an aggressive response"). The second blank requires a verb meaning to formally request or petition for help ("solicit international mediation").

**Why other options are wrong:** Options containing *illicit* are incorrect because the context requires a transitive verb in both positions, not an adjective meaning unlawful.

**Q8. Correct Answer: (B)**

**Meaning of the key word:** *Trenchant* means incisive, sharp, cutting, deeply analytical, and highly effective.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** The presentation "cleanly cut through layers of corporate jargon to highlight the structural flaws." This means the presentation was sharp and incisive.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- (A) *Incoherent* means lacking clarity.
- (C) *Verbose* means excessively wordy.
- (D) *Conciliatory* means peace-making or placating.

**Q9. Correct Answer: (A)**

**Meaning of the key word:** *Underlying causes* is a standard, deeply entrenched academic collocation referring to the fundamental, root reasons for a phenomenon that are not immediately obvious on the surface.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** The passage discusses deep structural recessions versus temporary surface relief (subsidies). The contrast demands a term for root/fundamental causes. "Underlying" is the exact standard collocation.

**Why other options are wrong:** *Bottoming*, *subterranean*, and *lower* are literal or incorrect terms that do not form standard idiom or collocation structures with "causes" in macroeconomic contexts.

**Q10. Correct Answer: (B)**

**Meaning of the key words:** *Ephemeral* means short-lived. *Permanence* is the state of lasting indefinitely. The relationship is absolute antonyms: an ephemeral thing completely lacks permanence.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** A *mercenary* person is motivated solely by personal material gain and structurally lacks *benevolence* (kindness, charity). This mirrors the antonymic noun-adjective pairing.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- (A) *Garrulous* means talkative; *loquacity* is talkativeness (synonyms).
- (C) *Indigent* means poor; *poverty* is the state of being poor (synonyms).
- (D) *Lucid* means clear; *clarity* is clearness (synonyms).

**Q11. Correct Answer: (B)**

**Meaning of the key word:** *Atomized* means split into isolated, disconnected units or atoms, completely stripped of collective cohesion.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** The text explicitly mentions a "deep cultural breakdown" and "fragmented collection... who lack shared social obligations." This directly points to radical isolation from social structures.

**Why other options are wrong:** (A) and (C) interpret the transition positively or uniformly, missing the negative focus on fragmentation and social decay.

**Q12. Correct Answer: (A)**

**Meaning of the key word:** *Mercurial* means volatile, fickle, erratic, and prone to sudden unpredictable changes in mood or mindset.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** The executive team was anxious because goals embraced in the morning were discarded by late afternoon. This unpredictable shifting is the definition of *capricious*.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- (B) *Phlegmatic* means calm and unemotional.
- (C) *Steadfast* means unwavering and loyal.
- (D) *Magnanimous* means highly generous or forgiving.

**Q13. Correct Answer: (B)**

**Meaning of the key word:** *Fastidious* means excessively particular, critical, demanding, and paying meticulous attention to tiny details.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** The researcher left "absolutely no room for experimental error" due to fastidious attention. The absolute opposite of this careful approach is being *negligent* (careless, remiss).

**Why other options are wrong:** *Meticulous* and *scrupulous* are close synonyms. *Discriminating* means showing careful judgment, which is also a related characteristic.

**Q14. Correct Answer: (B)**

**Meaning of the key word:** The phrase *to cut off one's nose to spite one's face* describes a self-destructive action taken out of a sense of anger, pride, or pique, where the damage done to oneself is far greater than any minor harm done to the other party.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** The negotiator risked a multi-billion-dollar alliance just because he refused to yield on minor, trivial clauses. This is a classic act of self-destructive pique.

**Why other options are wrong:** The other options misinterpret the self-damaging nature of the act as strategic precision or directed external sabotage.

**Q15. Correct Answer: (B)**

**Meaning of the key word:** *Natural Law* is the philosophical and legal doctrine stating that certain moral rights and ethical principles are inherent in human nature and can be understood universally through human reason, distinct from statutory laws passed by governments (*Positive Law*).

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** The question description outlines an "unwritten but universally recognized standard... accepted as inherently just by virtue of human nature and reason." This is the definition of Natural Law.

**Q16. Correct Answer: (D)**

**Meaning of the key word:** In standard usage, *qualify* means to be eligible or meet criteria (Sentence 2). In rigorous academic, philosophical, and verbal context arguments, *qualify* means to limit, modify, restrict, or moderate an absolute claim by adding caveats, conditions, or exceptions (Sentences 1, 3, and 4).

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:**

- In Sentence 1, the historian limits her thesis to urban centers (correct use of modifying a claim).
- In Sentence 2, the sprinter meets criteria for the final (correct standard use).
- In Sentence 3, the economist moderates his projections with caveats (correct academic use).
- In Sentence 4, the attorney limits the absolute nature of the statement by pointing out an impairment (correct use).

All four sentences demonstrate valid and precise contextual definitions of the word.

**CAT Elimination Technique:** Do not fall into the trap of assuming a word has only its most common conversational meaning. "Qualify an argument" is one of the most frequently tested alternate definitions in premium verbal exams.

**Q17. Correct Answer: (A)**

**Meaning of the key word:** *Obfuscate* means to render obscure, dark, unclear, or deliberately confusing to conceal the truth.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** A totalitarian regime using state media to cover up an economic collapse wants to confuse and cloud public understanding so that citizens cannot see the true state of the nation.

**Why other options are wrong:** (B) and (C) imply objective or neutral communication, which completely contradicts the behavior of a controlling regime. (D) describes the removal of political parties, but *obfuscate* refers specifically to the distortion of information and narratives, not physical dismantling.

**Q18. Correct Answer: (B)**

**Meaning of the key words:** *Soporific* is an adjective or noun meaning something that induces sleep or causes drowsiness; it directly reduces or eliminates *alertness*. The relationship is: X counteracts, reduces, or removes Y.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** An *anodyne* is a medical or mental pain-reliever; its explicit functional purpose is to mitigate, neutralize, or alleviate *pain*. This perfectly maps the logical paradigm of a remedy removing a condition.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- (A) *Corrosive* causes *destruction* (cause and effect, not mitigation).
- (C) *Stimulant* increases *energy* (enhancement, not removal).
- (D) *Catalyst* speeds up reactions but does not eliminate *equilibrium*.

**Q19. Correct Answer: (A)**

**Meaning of the key words:** *Arbitrary* means determined by whim, caprice, or individual preference rather than by objective data or reason. *Precipitate* as a verb means to cause an event or situation (typically an undesirable one) to happen suddenly, unexpectedly, or prematurely.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** The clause "lacking any objective basis in environmental safety data" matches the word *arbitrary*. The second blank requires a verb to explain how this ruling caused a sudden, sharp downturn: *precipitate* fits the context perfectly.

**Why other options are wrong:** *Participate* is intransitive and grammatically incorrect here. *Perpetuate* means to make a stable situation continue indefinitely, which contradicts the description of a "sudden, sharp downturn."

**Q20. Correct Answer: (C)**

**Meaning of the key word:** In literary theory, philosophy, and post-structuralism (specifically Derridean deconstruction), meaning is never fixed or fully present; it is continuously *deferred*, meaning it is postponed or passed along an endless path of signs and words, making an absolute interpretation impossible.

**Step-by-step Explanation & Context Fit:** The passage explicitly frames language as an "unstable medium" where absolute consensus on the ultimate intent is prevented. This aligns with the concept of meaning being postponed endlessly along a chain of linguistic references.

**Why other options are wrong:**

- (A) mistakes *deferred* for *deference* (showing respect to authority).
- (B) and (D) fail to match the theoretical focus on instability and structural open-endedness outlined in the passage.