

BARRON'S

The Leader in Test Preparation



ESSENTIAL WORDS FOR THE TOEFL®

6TH EDITION

Steven J. Matthiesen

- A fully updated list of 500 words that frequently appear on the TOEFL
- Definitions, sample sentences, and practice exercises to build your word power
- An overview of each section of the TOEFL iBT and ITP
- A Reading Section test with answers to help you assess your test-taking readiness

LESSON 4

- **ambiguous**
- **arbitrary**
- **assert**
- **astounding**
- **astute**
- **concur**
- **deceptively**
- **designate**
- **determined**
- **elicit**
- **embody**
- **instigate**
- **mundane**
- **petition**
- **relinquish**
- **resilient**
- **tempt**

ambiguous

adv. ambiguously
n. ambiguity

adj. of unclear meaning; something that can be understood in more than one way

syn. vague

The men received an *ambiguous* message from their boss.
Her letter was full of *ambiguities*.

arbitrary

adv. arbitrarily
n. arbitrariness

adj. an action or decision made with little thought, order, or reason

syn. haphazard

Her choice of clothing seemed *arbitrary*.
The teacher *arbitrarily* decided to give the class a test.

assert

adv. assertively
n. assertiveness
n. assertion
adj. assertive

v. to express or defend oneself strongly; to state positively

syn. declare

The government *asserted* its control over the banking system.
The company president is an *assertive* individual.

astounding

v. astound
adv. astoundingly

adj. very surprising

syn. astonishing

The scientists made an *astounding* discovery.
The fans were *astounded* by their team's success.

astute *adj.* very intelligent, smart, clever
adj. astutely *syn.* perceptive
n. astuteness

He was an *astute* worker, finishing in half the time it took the others to finish.

They *astutely* determined that there would be no chance to finish on time.

concur *v.* to have the same opinion or draw the same conclusion
n. concurrence *syn.* agree

The director *concurred* with the conclusions of the committee's report.

Do you *concur* with the details of the business plan?

deceptively *adv.* making something appear true or good when it is false or bad
adj. deceptive *syn.* misleadingly
v. deceive
n. deception

The magician *deceptively* made the rabbit disappear.

Richard *deceived* Joe about the cost of the coat.

designate *v.* to specify, name, or select to do a task; to indicate
n. designation *syn.* assign
n. designator

The president *designated* the vice president to represent him at the meeting.

The *designated* driver drove every one home after the party.

determined *adj.* strong in one's opinion, firm in conviction, to find out
n. determination *syn.* resolute
v. determine

They were *determined* to go to graduate school.

The judge *determined* that the man was lying.

elicit *v.* to get the facts or draw out the truth
n. elicitation *syn.* extract

A lawyer will *elicit* all the facts necessary to prove her case.
Elicitation of the truth can be difficult at times.

embody *v.* to be a good example of a concept or idea
n. embodiment *syn.* exemplify

The constitution is an *embodiment* of American ideals.
Charlotte *embodies* all of the qualities of a good leader.

instigate *v.* to cause a conflict or argument
n. instigator *syn.* initiate
adj. instigative
adv. instigatively

No one knew who had *instigated* the demonstration.
Dissatisfaction with government policies *instigated* the revolution.

mundane *adj.* common or routine
adv. mundanely *syn.* ordinary
n. mundaneness
n. mundanity

The student's *mundane* summer job frustrated her.
His mother asked him to do all the *mundane* household chores.

petition *v.* to make a request
n. petition *syn.* appeal

Canada *petitioned* the United Nations to consider its case.
The student's *petition* was denied.

relinquish *v.* to give up control
n. relinquishment *syn.* abdicate

The troubled executive *relinquished* her control of the company.
The *relinquishment* of his claim to the building will allow the building to be sold.

resilient

adv. resiliently
n. resilience

adj. strong enough to recover from difficulty or disease

syn. tenacious

She has a *resilient* personality and will soon feel better.

The doctor was surprised by his patient's *resilience*.

tempt

adv. temptingly
n. temptation
adj. tempting

v. to make it attractive to do something, usually something not good

syn. entice

The idea of getting rich quickly *tempted* him to invest his life savings.

Desserts are more *tempting* when one is on a diet.

MATCHING

Choose the synonym.

1. **appeal**
(A) enrich
(B) assert
(C) petition
(D) restore
2. **mundane**
(A) celebrated
(B) ordinary
(C) astounding
(D) alterable
3. **instigate**
(A) initiate
(B) empower
(C) intensify
(D) restore
4. **elicit**
(A) declare
(B) withdraw
(C) conform
(D) extract
5. **abdicate**
(A) relinquish
(B) alter
(C) encourage
(D) heighten
6. **misleadingly**
(A) abruptly
(B) deceptively
(C) progressively
(D) truly
7. **resolute**
(A) determined
(B) perfect
(C) renown
(D) perceptive
8. **resilient**
(A) bothersome
(B) vital
(C) unbearable
(D) tenacious
9. **embody**
(A) exemplify
(B) entice
(C) notice
(D) enrich
10. **vague**
(A) intolerable
(B) adverse
(C) beautiful
(D) ambiguous

LESSON 4—MULTIPLE-CHOICE TEST QUESTIONS

1. The creation and analysis of optical illusions involve mathematical and geometric principles, such as the proportionality between the areas of similar figures. Optical illusions and their effects are often created through careful physical attributes, such as a nonstandard use of perspective, distorted angles, **deceptive** shading, unusual juxtaposition, and color effects.

The word **deceptive** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) elusive
 - (B) misleading
 - (C) altered
 - (D) ambiguous
2. The Seneca Falls Convention, held in 1848, started the woman's suffrage movement in the United States. A "Declaration of Sentiments," which called upon women to organize and to **petition** for their rights, was passed. However, one controversial resolution, calling for the right of women to vote, narrowly passed. The ridicule of that provision of the Declaration caused many backers of women's rights to withdraw their support later on.

The word **petition** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) vote
 - (B) demand
 - (C) appeal
 - (D) persist
3. Space law is concerned with the proper uses of outer space. The most important treaty of space laws was the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. The participants who crafted the treaty concluded that the moon and all other celestial bodies were to be free for exploration and use by all nations. They also **concurred** that the use of weapons of mass destruction was to be forbidden in space.

The word **concurred** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) assumed
- (B) agreed
- (C) anticipated
- (D) observed

4. It is a common misconception that the U.S. Congress has the constitutional power to legislate nearly anything for the general welfare. The Constitution gives Congress many powers, but it does not give Congress the power to legislate freely for the general welfare. In many instances, the Congress cannot force the states to abide, although it has the power to **tempt** states by the offer of money. Congress may try to cause the states to do something by means of offers of subsidies or grants, but it cannot compel them to accept the incentives.

The word **tempt** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) coerce
- (B) entice
- (C) solicit
- (D) persuade

5. Due to the **astounding** progress of integrated-circuit technology, an enormous number of transistors can be placed onto a single integrated-circuit chip. The first commercially successful microprocessor chip had only 4,800 transistors, but the newest high-end chips now have over 700,000,000 transistors.

The word **astounding** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) astonishing
- (B) rapid
- (C) solid
- (D) resilient

6. Deer populations have grown dramatically in the northeast United States in the last 20 years. Many residents are happy to have deer in their communities, but many others see them as a menace. Deer often wander into traffic, cause automobile accidents, trample lawns, eat flowers, and host insects that carry disease. Therefore, many residents are **determined to** restrict their movements, fence them out, or even eliminate them altogether.

In stating that many people are **determined to** eliminate the deer, the author means that they

- (A) want to decide what to do.
- (B) support their increase.
- (C) insist on reducing them.
- (D) favor enlarging the herd.

7. The game of chess was not well organized until 1946, when the world chess governing body, FIDE, **asserted** its control over international play. At that time, national chess groups immediately welcomed the chance to join the new federation. However, FIDE's authority has not been universally recognized and even today there is no general agreement as to the status of the world championship.

The word **asserted** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) enhanced
- (B) empowered
- (C) permitted
- (D) declared

8. Social anthropologists attempt to illustrate the social emergence and evolution of the human race and to determine differences between human social organization and that of other primates. Despite the fact that all classifications of human societies and cultures are **arbitrary**, they also attempt to note differences between various human societies. In spite of these difficulties, anthropologists have made great advances in the identification and grouping of human civilizations.

The word **arbitrary** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) vague
- (B) haphazard
- (C) disputed
- (D) elusive

9. The Monroe Doctrine allowed the United States to intervene in the affairs of Latin American countries in case of foreign invasion. Once the United States was **designated** to act on behalf of its neighbors to the south, episodes of foreign interference decreased until the 1960s, when Cuba wanted the support and economic aid of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The word **designated** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) authorized
- (B) accustomed
- (C) determined
- (D) tempted

10. J. Edgar Hoover was an **astute** professional who served as Director of the FBI for 48 years. A resilient and determined government official, Hoover's tenure spanned one of the most important eras of modern U.S. history. His policies helped to shape and create what has now become a highly respected modern investigative organization.

The word **astute** in the passage is closest in meaning to

- Ⓐ acclaimed
- Ⓑ celebrated
- Ⓒ perceptive
- Ⓓ eminent