

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Shadows and Subtext: A 12th Grade Advanced Adjectives Inquiry

Evaluate how semantic nuance and cumulative modifiers manipulate subtext in literary passages beyond simple descriptive identification.

1. In the sentence, 'The sepulchral, almost liturgical silence of the library weighed upon the scholars,' which term describes the function of 'sepulchral' and 'liturgical'?

Answer: B) Coordinate adjectives

These are coordinate adjectives because they independently modify the noun 'silence' and are separated by a comma (and could be joined by 'and' without losing meaning).

2. In the phrase 'the whispering, ancient, silvered birch trees,' the adjectives are considered cumulative and therefore should never be separated by commas.

Answer: B) False

This is false; these are coordinate adjectives. Cumulative adjectives follow a specific order (size, age, color, etc.) and do not use commas, whereas these are descriptive and interchangeable.

3. Choose the adjective that functions as a Nominal Adjective (Substantive) in the following sociological context: 'The _____ must navigate a system designed for the affluent.'

Answer: A) impoverished

'The impoverished' functions as a noun phrase (nominal adjective) representing a group of people, mirroring the use of 'the affluent' later in the sentence.

4. Identify the psychological nuance conveyed by the absolute adjective in this sentence: 'His commitment to the cause was total.'

Answer: C) It expresses a state that does not admit of degrees.

'Total' is an absolute adjective; logically, something cannot be 'more total' or 'most total,' indicating an ultimate, non-gradable state.

5. Identify the correct sequence of cumulative adjectives to modify 'Victorian escritoir': 'The _____, _____, _____ Victorian escritoir.'

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Answer: C) exquisite, small, mahogany

Standard English adjective order usually follows Opinion (exquisite), Size (small), and then Material (mahogany).

6. In the literary phrase 'the woods decay, the woods decay and fall,' the word 'decay' functions as a participial adjective.

Answer: B) False

In this context (from Tennyson), 'decay' is a verb. A participial adjective would be 'decaying' or 'decayed' (e.g., 'the decaying woods').

7. Analyze the bolded word: 'The investigator found the evidence **wanting****.' What is the grammatical role of this adjective?**

Answer: B) Object complement

'Wanting' follows the direct object 'evidence' and describes it, making it an object complement (a type of predicative adjective structure).

8. Identify the archaic or poetic postpositive adjective in the following title: 'The Paradise _____.'

Answer: B) Lost

In Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' the adjective 'Lost' follows the noun it modifies, which is a postpositive construction often used for stylistic emphasis in epic poetry.

9. The word 'fast' in the sentence 'He was a fast learner' is a qualitative adjective, but in 'He ran fast,' it functions as an adverb.

Answer: A) True

This is true. 'Fast' is a flat adverb/adjective. In the first instance, it modifies the noun 'learner'; in the second, it modifies the verb 'ran'.

10. Which of the following sentences utilizes a Compound Adjective correctly to satisfy formal synthesis writing standards?

Answer: C) The well-known author spoke at length.

Compound adjectives are hyphenated when they precede the noun they modify ('well-known author'). Note: adverbs ending in -ly are typically not hyphenated even when prepending a noun.