

D. Recognizing Sound/Meaning Distractors

Some responses are incorrect because of problems involving sound and meaning.

Sample Items: Sound/Meaning Problems

Did you catch the plane?

- (A) No, I didn't change my plan.
- (B) Yes, but I almost missed it.
- (C) No, I didn't catch a cold.

The question contains the word *plane*. Choice (A) contains the sound-alike word *plan* and is incorrect. The question also includes the word *catch*. Choice (C) contains the word *catch* too, but it has another meaning (to contract an illness).

How did you hear about this event?

- (A) My brother told me.
- (B) The event is not held here.
- (C) It starts at nine.

Choice (B) contains the word *here*, which sounds exactly like the word *hear* in the question. However, choice (B) does not answer the question. Choice (C) answers the question "When does the event start?"

There are three types of sound/meaning problems:

1. Sound-alike words: The question and one of the responses have words with similar sounds but different meanings (such as *plane* and *plan* in the first sample item).
2. Words with multiple meanings: The question contains a word that has more than one meaning. The word is used one way in the question and another way in one of the responses (*catch* and *catch* in the first sample item).
3. Homophones: The question and one of the responses contain a homophone — a word that has the same pronunciation but a different meaning (*hear* and *here* in the second sample item).

Exercise 2.11

Focus: Identifying distractors based on sound/meaning problems, and choosing correct answers.

Directions: You will hear a number of questions, each followed by three possible responses to the question. For each item, choose the letter of the response that best answers the question.



Now start the audio program.

- | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Mark your answer. | <input type="radio"/> (A) | <input type="radio"/> (B) | <input type="radio"/> (C) | 6. Mark your answer. | <input type="radio"/> (A) | <input type="radio"/> (B) | <input type="radio"/> (C) |
| 2. Mark your answer. | <input type="radio"/> (A) | <input type="radio"/> (B) | <input type="radio"/> (C) | 7. Mark your answer. | <input type="radio"/> (A) | <input type="radio"/> (B) | <input type="radio"/> (C) |
| 3. Mark your answer. | <input type="radio"/> (A) | <input type="radio"/> (B) | <input type="radio"/> (C) | 8. Mark your answer. | <input type="radio"/> (A) | <input type="radio"/> (B) | <input type="radio"/> (C) |
| 4. Mark your answer. | <input type="radio"/> (A) | <input type="radio"/> (B) | <input type="radio"/> (C) | 9. Mark your answer. | <input type="radio"/> (A) | <input type="radio"/> (B) | <input type="radio"/> (C) |
| 5. Mark your answer. | <input type="radio"/> (A) | <input type="radio"/> (B) | <input type="radio"/> (C) | 10. Mark your answer. | <input type="radio"/> (A) | <input type="radio"/> (B) | <input type="radio"/> (C) |

E. Recognizing Other Types of Distractors

Some responses are incorrect for the following reasons:

1. Incorrect verb tense

Where did Jacques go?

(A) He'll go to the bookstore tomorrow.

The question asks about the past (*did . . . go*), but the response involves the future. (*He'll go to the bookstore tomorrow.*)

2. Incorrect person

Do you plan to go with her?

(A) Yes, she plans to.

The question asks about *you*, so the response should use the word *I* or *we*. Instead, it incorrectly involves the word *she*.

3. Response to the incorrect type of question

When did Maria leave?

(A) I think she went to the bank.

The question asks about time (*When . . . ?*), but the response provides a destination (*the bank*). This response is incorrect because it answers a *where . . . to?* question, not a *when . . . ?* question.

Were you here at noon?

(A) At a restaurant.

The question asks for a yes/no reply, but the response answers an information question. ("Where were you at noon?")

Do you want one scoop of ice cream or two?

(A) Yes, please.

The question asks the listener to choose between one scoop or two, but the response is a simple affirmative. This is a proper answer for a yes/no question, not for an alternative question.

Exercise 2.12

Focus: Identifying common types of distractors for Part II items.

Directions: You will hear a question followed by a response. In each case, the response is an inappropriate one. Choose the category that most correctly explains why the response is not an appropriate one, and mark the blank accordingly.



Now start the audio program.

	Wrong Tense	Wrong Person	Wrong Type of Question
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____	_____