

5. She was so determined that she managed to finish the marathon despite her injury.
(SHEER)
=> It was by ___ that she managed to finish the marathon despite her injury.

Section 3.4: Open Cloze Test

Instructions: Read the text and fill in each blank with ONE suitable word.

In an era of information overload, the ability to think critically has never been (101)___ vital. It is one thing to have access to a virtually infinite repository of data; it is quite (102)___ to possess the discernment to sift the wheat from the chaff. Critical thinking is not merely about cynicism or fault-finding; (103)___, it is a disciplined process of conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, and evaluating information. It requires one to question underlying assumptions, to be wary of rhetorical manipulation, and to recognize the limitations of one's (104)___ perspective. (105)___ this intellectual rigor, one is susceptible to misinformation and demagoguery, becoming a passive consumer of narratives rather than an active participant in democratic discourse.

Section 3.5: Word Choice & Idiomatic Language

Instructions: Choose the single word or phrase that best completes the sentence, paying close attention to nuance and idiomatic usage.

1. The team's victory was a real shot in the ___ for the struggling club.
A. foot **B.** arm **C.** leg **D.** head
2. His arguments, while eloquent, were ultimately ___ and lacked substance.
A. specious **B.** veritable **C.** factual **D.** authentic
3. I wouldn't trust him; he's been known to play fast and ___ with the truth.
A. easy **B.** hard **C.** loose **D.** tight
4. After the market crash, his ambitious plans came to ___ nothing.
A. less than **B.** little but **C.** naught **D.** barely
5. Her promotion was a ___ conclusion, given her outstanding performance.
A. foregone **B.** preconceived **C.** predetermined **D.** fated
6. The government's attempts to solve the crisis were seen as merely ___ with the problem.
A. tinkering **B.** grappling **C.** fighting **D.** settling
7. The old traditions have largely fallen by the ___.
A. wayside **B.** roadside **C.** path **D.** street
8. He has a ___ for saying the wrong thing at the wrong time.
A. habit **B.** penchant **C.** custom **D.** tendency