

## Answers to Exercises

### C) Key Words from Context

1. To pretend not to notice something: **to turn a blind eye**

*"The government often **turn a blind eye** to immoral business practices."*

*"If you perform very well then I will **turn a blind eye** to your mistakes."*

2. To get an advantage, to put yourself ahead of the competition: **to gain an edge**

*"The adoption of this new technology will help us to **gain an edge** over the competition."*

3. To get: **obtain**

*"We have **obtained** our business license, so we can begin trading immediately."*

*"We have managed to **obtain** some very important information."*

4. A difference in level or in treatment: **disparity**

*"There is a large **disparity** between the wealthiest and the poorest in our society."*

*"We can see a big **disparity** in the market between the market leader and all other companies in the sector."*

5. To make a situation fair for everyone, to create a situation where no-one has an advantage: **to level the playing field**

*"We have been falling behind our competitors for a while now, but the introduction of this new technology should help us to **level the playing field**."*

6. To compare two things and indicate that they are similar: **to draw parallels**

*"With the current difficult economic situation, we can **draw parallels** with the situation 20 years ago."*

*"The two companies are very similar in that we can **draw parallels** between their management structures."*

7. To be more than or more significant than: **to outweigh**

*"I think that it is a good deal. The benefits clearly **outweigh** the risks, so think we should accept it."*

8. Dull, lacking in interest or excitement: **mundane**

*"Employees soon become unhappy if they are only asked to complete **mundane** tasks."*

9. A sudden powerful increase or upward movement: **a surge**

*"The country is witnessing a **surge** in unemployment due to the financial crisis."*

*"Due to the fact that the company is growing, we are getting a real **surge** in requests from potential clients."*

10. To adopt an undesirable course of action in order to solve a difficult or extreme situation: **to resort to**

*"Last year we had to **resort to** making some redundancies, as the company had just lost some key clients."*

11. To introduce an unwelcome or restrictive measure: **to impose**

*"The government has **imposed** new regulations related to business licenses."*

*"The company has **imposed** some new rules meaning that we have to be in the office at least 3 days per week."*

12. To make the difference between two things less clear, or to make it difficult to see the exact truth about something: **to blur the lines**

*"The popularity of working from home has **blurred the lines** between work and private life."*

13. The act of trying to achieve a plan, activity, or situation, often over a long period of time: **pursuit**

*"I have worked very hard in the **pursuit** of a fulfilling career."*

*"Our company has made several innovations in the **pursuit** of excellence."*

14. To slow down the progress or growth of something: **to inhibit**

*"Our budget constraints are **inhibiting** our progress."*

15. To improve or encourage the development of something: **to foster**

*"At our company, we aim to **foster** a strong sense of team spirit."*

## D) Comprehension

**Can you answer the questions below about the text?**

1. According to the article, in what ways can Adderall and Ritalin improve performance at work?  
**They can improve mental energy, motivation to work, and the ability to remain focused on a specific task for long periods, even a task which is boring.**
2. If some employees take Adderall and Ritalin in the workplace, what could happen to employees who choose not to take them?

They may to keep up with colleagues who take such drugs due to their enhanced cognitive abilities. This could lead to some employees burning out. Some may attempt to get an ADHD diagnosis in order to get hold of such tablets.

3. According to the article, what are the different ways in which someone could get hold of Adderall or Ritalin? (You may have to look across the whole article for this question)  
You could get these drugs with an ADHD diagnosis (for which some people try to get one illegitimately). You can also acquire them through friends or people you know.
4. What are the downsides to taking Adderall or Ritalin?  
Nervousness, anxiety, insomnia and stomach pains in the short term, along with potential lower performance the day after taking them. In the long term they can become addictive.
5. According to the author, what are 2 contrasting approaches that companies take when they find out that one of their employees is taking a “smart drug”?  
Some completely ignore it because they believe that it will benefit the company if employees are working harder and becoming more competitive.  
Other companies try to introduce drugs policies, which suggests that they may attempt to ban their use in the workplace.

#### E) Key Words in a New Context

##### **Gaining an Edge: Extreme measures that companies take to get ahead of the competition**

While many companies focus on the quality of their products to gain a competitive edge, some may **resort** to more extreme or controversial tactics in the **pursuit** of profit. Here are some examples of more extreme ways that companies might try to get ahead:

- **Corporate Espionage:** Some companies engage in spying on their rivals to **obtain** confidential information about trade secrets, client data or strategic plans.
- **Sabotage:** In very rare and extreme cases, companies may decide to spread false information or disrupt supply chains in order to **inhibit** a rival company's operations.
- **Price Dumping:** In an attempt to drive competitors out of the market, companies might temporarily turn to selling products at an unsustainably low price. This can lead to a short-term **surge** in the company's sales, but may be considered anti-competitive. The lines between legal price dumping and illegal price dumping are also **blurred**, so it could cause legal problems for the company.
- **Monopolistic Practices:** Big companies may try to establish or maintain a monopoly by engaging in unethical practices. Policies such as price-fixing, exclusive dealing and aggressive mergers all seek to widen the **disparity** between huge companies and the smaller players in the market, ensuring that such small fish have no chance to **level the playing field**.
- **Lobbying and Political Influence:** Companies may try to influence government policies and regulations in their favour through lobbying and political contributions.

Governments might **impose** laws and regulations in a way that benefits their business, and therefore **inhibits** the growth of competitors. Companies may lobby politicians to **turn a blind eye** to potential unethical practices that the company is engaging in.

- **Employee Poaching:** Aggressively stealing key talent from competitors can weaken the rival company and strengthen the poaching company. If this is taken to the extreme, it could cause legal disputes and damaged relationships, meaning that the disadvantages of stealing talent often **outweigh** the advantages.