

For questions 9-16, read the text below and think of the word which best fits each gap. Use only one word in each gap. There is an example at the beginning (0).

Write your answers IN CAPITAL LETTERS.

Example: (0) LET

Michael Jordan

This is the name familiar to everyone. Even people who have no interest in the world of sports, **0** _____ alone NBA, still know who Michael Jordan is. Among multiple accolades, one of the biggest achievements in his career was winning the most valuable NBA player award six times - a record anybody is **9** _____ to beat. One of the best all-round players in the history of basketball, he preferred the position of the shooting guard, excelling **10** _____ mid- and long-range shots.

Like many other professional athletes, Jordan is known to have attempted retiring **11** _____ professional sports several times. In his sports career he tried his hand **12** _____ baseball and even NASCAR racing – in the latter as a team manager, **13** _____ than as a driver. Throughout his life he returned to playing basketball twice, **14** _____ his eventual retirement in 2003.

Despite his outstanding achievements in sports, even the great MJ is not **15** _____ a fault. At one period of his life he got carried away with gambling, losing a substantial amount of money. It goes to show that even the greatest people are not immune **16** _____ vice. Having overcome this, Michael Jordan went on to become one of the richest athletes to date.

Answers and explanations

9. **Yet.** When something is yet to be done, it means it has not been done. Even though ‘unlikely’ can work grammatically and even contextually, it introduces an idea that is not suggested by the text – technically, this record can be beaten.
10. **At.** To excel at something means to be extremely good (excellent) at it. The only possible difficulty here is not understanding what part of speech the word ‘excel’ is. ‘To excel in something’ is incorrect.
11. **From.** If you retire from something, you give up that activity for good, either because of your age or other factors. Note that ‘retire’ doesn’t need a preposition if there is no object, e.g. ‘he decided to retire without a reason’.
12. **At.** Trying your hand at something means attempting to do something to see if you like it or if you are any good at it.
13. **Rather.** We use the adverb ‘rather’ to introduce contrast – this time Jackson wasn’t a direct participant, but tried himself in a managerial role. Note that even though ‘rather’ is normally used to show preference (e.g. ‘I’d rather not do that’), here it serves a different purpose.
14. **Until.** Up to a particular point in time – in this case, his decision to retire in 2003. ‘With his eventual retirement in 2003’ fits grammatically, but it doesn’t show enough contrast with the previous part, which focuses on his return to playing the game.
15. **Without.** An unusual (for the English language) case of double negative here shows that MJ did have a fault. The context guides us here – a good example that you have to read on to get the meaning right.
16. **To.** If you are immune to something, it means you cannot be affected or hurt by it. Chiefly used to refer to something negative, e.g. ‘this animal is immune to most diseases that can affect humans’.