

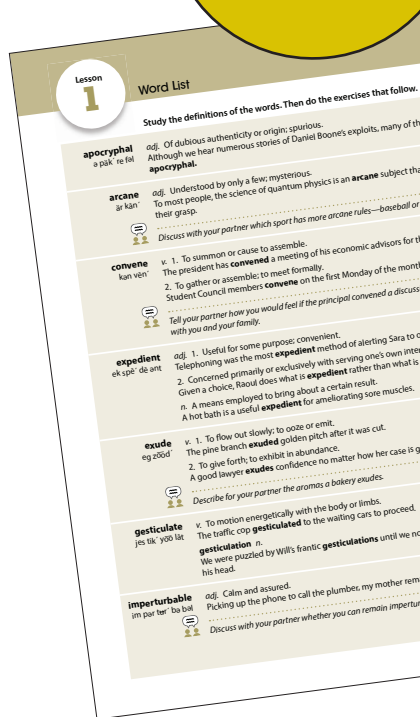
4th Edition

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BOOK 11:
Lessons
1 & 10



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Word List

Study the definitions of the words. Then do the exercises that follow.

apocryphal

ə pāk' re fəl

adj. Of dubious authenticity or origin; spurious.

Although we hear numerous stories of Daniel Boone's exploits, many of them are **apocryphal**.

arcane

är kăn'

adj. Understood by only a few; mysterious.

To most people, the science of quantum physics is an **arcane** subject that is beyond their grasp.



.....
Discuss with your partner which sport has more arcane rules—baseball or football.

convene

kən vĕn'

v. 1. To summon or cause to assemble.

The president has **convened** a meeting of his economic advisors for this Thursday.

2. To gather or assemble; to meet formally.

Student Council members **convene** on the first Monday of the month.



.....
Tell your partner how you would feel if the principal convened a discussion in the school office with you and your family.

expedient

ek spĕ' dĕ ənt

adj. 1. Useful for some purpose; convenient.

Telephoning was the most **expedient** method of alerting Sara to our change of plan.

2. Concerned primarily or exclusively with serving one's own interests.

Given a choice, Raoul does what is **expedient** rather than what is right.

n. A means employed to bring about a certain result.

A hot bath is a useful **expedient** for ameliorating sore muscles.

exude

eg zōod'

v. 1. To flow out slowly; to ooze or emit.

The pine branch **exuded** golden pitch after it was cut.

2. To give forth; to exhibit in abundance.

A good lawyer **exudes** confidence no matter how her case is going.



.....
Describe for your partner the aromas a bakery exudes.

gesticulate

jes tik' yōō lāt

v. To motion energetically with the body or limbs.

The traffic cop **gesticulated** to the waiting cars to proceed.

gesticulation *n.*

We were puzzled by Will's frantic **gesticulations** until we noticed the bee buzzing around his head.

imperturbable

im pər tūr' bə bəl

adj. Calm and assured.

Picking up the phone to call the plumber, my mother remained **imperturbable**.



.....
Discuss with your partner whether you can remain imperturbable during a horror movie.

increment
in' krə mənt

n. An increase, addition, or gain, often by regular, consecutive amounts.
Even small **increments** to a savings account add up to a substantial sum over time.

incremental *adj.* (in krə mənt' l)

Incremental changes to the dosage of Sunil's medication were necessary to maintain its effectiveness.



.....
For the next fifteen seconds, make incremental changes in your position to move slowly away from your partner.

levity
lev' ə tē

n. Excessive frivolity; a lack of seriousness; joking.
The atmosphere at the party was one of **levity** with much joking, laughter, and general silliness.

mortify
môr' tə fi

v. To embarrass or humiliate.
Jae Lee's fall to the ice just as he was ready to fire the puck past the goalie **mortified** him for days.

periphery
pə rif' ə ē

n. The area around the edges; the outermost part.
Hesitant to enter the walled garden, Josefina made her way instead along the **periphery**.
peripheral *adj.* Relating to, involving, or forming an outer edge or boundary; not central.
Bill Bradley's extraordinary **peripheral** vision allowed him to see more of the basketball court than his opponents could see.



.....
Talk to your partner about what is on the periphery of the classroom.

raconteur
ra kən tūr'

n. One who tells stories with skill and wit.
Aunt Clara knew so many stories and was such a superb **raconteur** that she could entertain us for hours.

reiterate
rē it' ə r āt

v. To say or do over again; to repeat.
The signs posted at fifty-foot intervals **reiterate** the warning against hunting.



.....
Reiterate to your partner what you should do if there is a fire drill while you're at school.

subterfuge
sub' tər fyōōj

n. A deceptive scheme or strategy.
Friar Laurence's **subterfuge** to bring Romeo and Juliet together not only deceived their families, but also came to a terrible end.

vacillate
vas' ə lāt

v. 1. To move back and forth from lack of balance; waver.
The needle **vacillated** between 5 and 6 before registering 5.4 on the Richter scale.
2. To alternate indecisively between opinions or courses of action.
Keya's summer plans are still not set, because she is **vacillating** between a cross-country bike ride and an internship with the science museum.

1A

Understanding Meanings

Read the following sentences. If the word in bold is used correctly, write C on the line. If the word is used incorrectly, write a new sentence using the word correctly.

1. Persons who **convene** come together in a group.

2. An **imperturbable** person is one who gets upset easily.

3. **Peripheral** matters are those that are not central.

4. To **reiterate** a concern is to express it over and over again.

5. A **subterfuge** is a comment that is not intended to be heard.

6. To **exude** confidence is to exhibit it in abundance.

7. **Incremental** changes are those made gradually.

8. A **raconteur** is a person who is skilled at deceiving others.

9. To **gesticulate** is to say or express something by making gestures.

10. An **expedient** is a means to accomplishing an end.

11. To **mortify** someone is to cause that person's death.

12. **Levity** is a state of perfect balance.

13. An **arcane** theory is one that not many people understand.

14. To **vacillate** is to keep changing one's mind.

15. An **apocryphal** event is one of earth-shaking significance.

1B

Using Words

If the word (or a form of the word) in bold fits in a sentence in the group following it, write the word in the blank space. If the word does not fit, leave the space empty. There may be more than one correct answer or no correct answer.

1. **exude**

(a) Moisture from the body is _____ through the pores of the skin.

(b) As soon as Tyson _____ the speed limit, he was stopped by the highway patrol.

(c) The producer _____ such charm that it was hard to refuse his offer.

2. **mortify**

(a) When I went to pay the check, I was _____ to discover that I had no money.

(b) The _____ professor realized too late that she had given her students the answer key instead of the exam.

(c) Fortunately, the dog was not _____ when it ran into the street.

3. **vacillate**

(a) Dr. Shin _____ the baby against a variety of diseases.

(b) Ayesha _____ the drink until all the ingredients were combined.

(c) My little sister _____ between a party at home and a trip to the ice-skating rink for her birthday.

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vacillate

4. **raconteur**

- (a) Abraham Lincoln was an excellent _____ with many interesting stories.
- (b) Leslie forgot the punch line, so we never found out how the _____ ended.
- (c) A good _____ pays close attention to the response of the listeners.

5. **gesticulate**

- (a) Secretary Braun said she had _____ several ideas in her mind that might help us solve the problem.
- (b) The baby wriggled and laughed when we _____ her tummy.
- (c) He _____ so much when he talked that I paid more attention to his arms than to his story.

6. **apocryphal**

- (a) A nuclear war would be the most _____ event in human history.
- (b) I never know when she's being _____ and when she's telling the truth.
- (c) We dismissed these accounts of UFO contacts with humans as _____ .

7. **expedient**

- (a) Guessing is the unprepared person's _____ for coping with tests.
- (b) In view of the heavy rains, it may be _____ to delay the spring planting.
- (c) Nations sometimes do what is politically _____ without regard to morality.

8. **convene**

- (a) I _____ Rohan's message to the members of his family.
- (b) The manager _____ so many meetings that little actual work got done.
- (c) All the teachers _____ after school to discuss whether to introduce Spanish in grade four.

1c

Word Study: Similar Meanings

Choose from the two words provided and use each word only once when completing each sentence. One space should be left blank.

vacillate / waver

- Juan will _____ for hours over whether to stay or go.
- Charlotte's determination to take part in the event slowly began to _____.
- The boat began to _____, and seconds later it sank.

exudes / emits

- A successful speaker _____ confidence on the platform.
- The newest engine _____ very little carbon dioxide.
- Ms. Ruiz _____ words of wisdom to anyone who will listen.

arcane / mysterious

- The walls were painted in bright _____ colors to create a cheerful effect.
- We never found out what caused the _____ noise in the cellar.
- The high priests possessed _____ knowledge denied to ordinary Romans.

apocryphal / spurious

- The _____ signature on the document made the lease invalid.
- Many of Uncle Sayed's stories are _____, but we enjoy hearing them.
- Lindsay learned that the diamond in her ring is almost certainly _____.

expedient / convenient

- I felt that the most _____ thing was to say nothing at all about the matter.
- I notice that Mika has grown increasingly _____ since she took up sports.
- Using the Internet is a very _____ way to shop.

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Images of Words

Circle the letter next to the sentence that suggests the bold vocabulary word. There may be more than one correct answer or no correct answer.

1. **imperturbable**

- (a) There was not enough breeze to fill the sails, so Tovah started the engine.
- (b) Robin studies, oblivious to her siblings playing loudly around her.
- (c) The little boy stuck out his tongue at me and then turned and ran.

2. **expedient**

- (a) When we heard that a blizzard was forecast, we decided to return home.
- (b) To guarantee that the package arrives tomorrow, you should use the express service.
- (c) The candidate reversed his position on gun control when he saw the latest polls.

3. **levity**

- (a) The new fighter jet soared to twenty thousand feet in less than a minute.
- (b) I always enjoy reading the jokes in this magazine.
- (c) The banter and loud laughter emanating from the next table prevented us from enjoying our meal.

4. **reiterate**

- (a) When LaVonne got off the roller coaster, she wanted to get right back on again.
- (b) The sick child kept saying, "I want my mommy."
- (c) The phone rang repeatedly, but no one bothered to answer it.

5. **apocryphal**

- (a) She said that he said his friend knows a movie star.
- (b) For three days in a row, the local weather forecast was wrong.
- (c) Mark Twain said that reports of his death had been "greatly exaggerated."

6. **incremental**

- (a) Last night's six inches of snow brings the month's total to fifty-eight inches.
- (b) Men's jacket sizes are 36-inch, 38-inch, 40-inch, 42-inch, and 44-inch.
- (c) Her starting salary was \$34,000, but each year she received a \$1,000 raise until she was earning \$40,000 a year.

7. **vacillate**

- (a) The baby cried when the nurse gave her a measles shot.
- (b) Color variations make the bark of the sycamore tree distinctive.
- (c) The car skidded on the ice and went off the road into the guard rail.

8. **arcane**

- (a) Karl Marx's theory of labor is understood by very few people.
- (b) Alonso has trouble understanding simple addition and subtraction.
- (c) Few people outside of south-central Chile can speak Araucan.

9. **peripheral**

- (a) Because she worked only one day a week, Ms. Dawson had little to do with the project.
- (b) Uranus, the most distant planet in our solar system, is more than a billion miles from the sun.
- (c) The story that Davy Crockett killed a bear when he was only three is false.

10. **subterfuge**

- (a) The fountain is supplied with water from an underground pipe.
- (b) The Greeks are said to have penetrated Troy's defenses by hiding inside a wooden horse.
- (c) The man on the phone was by posing as an inspector for the gas company.

1E

Vocabulary in Context

Read the passage.

Going, Going, Gone!

A man attending an auction absent-mindedly scratches his ear and, within a few minutes, is **mortified** to learn that with this casual movement he has bought a stuffed and mounted moose head complete with antlers. The story, though **apocryphal**, is a staple of auction folklore and expresses the fear that some people have of being drawn unwittingly into the bidding fray. The fear is unjustified. Bidding in public auctions is usually done by **gesticulating** in the auctioneer's direction while holding a numbered card aloft. The possibility of anyone making an unintended offer under these circumstances is slight.

In the **arcane** world of private, fine art auction houses, events are conducted with conspicuous restraint. Most people attending such auctions are known to the auctioneer and to each other because many are dealers who come to buy for their own business or for private clients. As the **imperturbable** auctioneer presides over the sale of an item whose price may eventually reach tens of millions of dollars, a person may bid by doing nothing more than catching the auctioneer's eye. In contrast, tugging an ear or looking up at the ceiling may be signals arranged beforehand with the auctioneer to indicate a desire to withdraw from the bidding.

The success of any auction, whether public or private, depends to a great degree on the skill of the person conducting the auction. A good auctioneer must be something of a **raconteur**, with a fund of amusing stories to tell and the wit to keep them brief. Often, by using a little **levity**, he or she can relax the crowd and help the bids flow more freely.

Various **subterfuges** are commonly employed to create interest and maintain alertness in the audience. The auctioneer may cry "Sold!" just as the bidding is getting underway. One lucky person gets a valuable item for a song, and the rest learn

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that if they **vacillate**, a bargain may slip away. Auctioneers have even been known to drop a (not very valuable) vase as an **expedient** to get the attention of a crowd that seems to be drifting into boredom.

Given the large number of auctions held in the United States each year, there is an increasing demand for people qualified to conduct them. This demand is met in large part by schools for auctioneers. The oldest and largest of these is the Missouri Auction School in Kansas City, founded in 1905. It **convenes** four times a year for intensive nine-day courses. These are attended by up to one thousand men and women of all ages and walks of life hoping to become professional auctioneers.

Doing their best to **exude** the kind of confidence auctioneers must demonstrate, students conduct mock auctions, with the rest of the class acting as potential bidders. They learn to develop their **peripheral** vision so as not to miss bids from the side of the hall, and they get a chance to practice the uniquely American style of conducting auctions in a singsong chant. An uninterrupted flow of words is punctuated by **reiterated** reminders of the last bid, followed by the bid the auctioneer would like to get from the audience. His or her chant might go like this: “. . . *thirty* dollar bid an’ now forty, now forty . . . *thirty* dollar bid and *willya* gimme forty . . . *thirty* dollar bid an’ now five . . . *thirty-five* dollar bid and *willya* gimme forty . . .”

Why the chant? One practical reason is that it places less strain on the auctioneer’s voice than saying the same words for long periods of time. In addition, the rhythmical pattern of speech often helps draw and maintain the attention of the audience. Finally, as one student of auctions has explained, “Chanting makes less obvious the sometimes long, quiet intervals between bids, thus obscuring the fact that the bidding is anything but lively.”

Auctions are a popular form of entertainment in the United States. Whether the bidding increases in **increments** of five dollars or, as in important art auctions, in hundreds of thousands of dollars, they offer excitement, suspense, and, occasionally, high drama. Perhaps this explains why millions of Americans attend auctions each year.

► **Answer each question with a sentence. If a question does not contain a word from the lesson, use one in your answer. Use each word only once.**

1. Why might a very good **raconteur** make a poor auctioneer?

2. What possibilities for training exist for people who want to become auctioneers?

3. When do you think it would be most important for an auctioneer to be **imperturbable**?

4. How does the passage make clear that the moose-head story may be untrue?

5. What is one skill both ball players and auctioneers need to cultivate?

6. How might a good auctioneer add **levity** to an auction?

7. How do auctioneers make sure their audiences know the last bid that was taken?

8. According to the passage, what is one way the bidding in a private art auction differs from that in a public auction?

9. Describe what you would consider a **mortifying** experience for a bidder.

10. What does an auctioneer often use to keep an audience's attention?

11. Why do you think the world of the fine art auction houses is described as **arcane**?

12. What are some **expedients** that bidders in fine art auctions use to withdraw from the bidding?

	apocryphal
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	levity
	mortify
	periphery
	raconteur
	reiterate
	subterfuge
	vacillate

Fun & Fascinating FACTS

- When the King James version of the Bible was published in 1611, the scholars preparing it worked from a Greek translation made in the third century BCE. Fourteen books were excluded because they were not considered part of the original Jewish scriptures and were of doubtful authenticity. They are called the Apocrypha, from the Greek *apokruphos*, "hidden." The adjective **apocryphal** may refer to these fourteen books or mean "of doubtful authenticity."
- **Levity** is lightness of manner or speech; the word derives from the Latin *levis*, "light in weight." Several other words share this root. To *levitate* is to become so light that one rises up in defiance of gravity. To *alleviate* a person's woes is to lighten them. *Leavened* bread rises through the action of yeast.
- *Iterate* means "to say again." The prefix *re-* means "again"; putting it before *iterate* to form **reiterate** seems repetitious. Actually, the two words are synonyms, but *reiterate*, perhaps because the prefix strengthens the meaning, is more commonly used; *iterate* has become obsolete.

Study the definitions of the words. Then do the exercises that follow.

amnesia

am nē' zhə

n. 1. A loss of memory, usually caused by shock or injury.

The patient's **amnesia** was so acute that his own children were strangers to him.

2. A gap in one's memory.

While Uncle Jorge had bad **amnesia** concerning his middle school years, he remembered his high school years perfectly.

appease

ə pēz'

v. 1. To bring to a state of peace or quiet.

The principal's reassurances did little to **appease** our concerns about the school's future.

2. To pacify an adversary, often by making concessions.

Attempts to **appease** dictators frequently serve only to increase their aggression.



.....
Talk to your partner about whether a bully should be appeased or opposed.

attrition

ə trish' ən

n. 1. A gradual reduction in numbers or loss of strength.

The **attrition** of manufacturing jobs in the United States was due in part to the rise of inexpensive imports.

2. A weakening resulting from pressure or harassment.

The guerrillas hid in the jungle and conducted a war of **attrition**.



.....
Ask your partner whether libraries should put more resources into stopping the attrition of books or into adding more computers.

debacle

de bāk' əl

n. A sudden collapse, downfall, or failure.

A long rise in stock prices ended with the Wall Street **debacle** of 1929, which marked the advent of the Great Depression.

defoliate

dē fō' lē ət

v. To strip a plant of leaves, thereby damaging or destroying it.

Gypsy moths **defoliated** many of the trees in the park, leaving bare branches in their wake.

equestrian

ē kwes' trē ən

adj. Having to do with horseback riding.

Ana's love of horses led her to develop her **equestrian** skills.

n. One who rides on horseback.

An accomplished **equestrian** is usually familiar with the rules of show jumping.

expunge

ek spunj'

v. To obliterate or erase completely.

The burglar wiped the window sills, **expunging** any trace of his fingerprints.



.....
Discuss with your partner how you could expunge your presence on social media.

hackneyed

hak' nēd

adj. Commonplace; trite; lacking force or significance because of overuse.

"As cool as a cucumber" has become a **hackneyed** expression.

opprobrium

ə prō' brē əm

n. Scornful treatment or contempt, especially as a result of disgraceful behavior. Representative Michaels endured daily **opprobrium** in her district after being convicted of ethics violations.



.....
Tell your partner about a public figure who is being treated with opprobrium.

proviso

prō vī' zō

n. A statement that makes a condition, qualification, or restriction. The brothers accepted our invitation to dinner with the **proviso** that they be allowed to reciprocate.

sully

sul' ē

v. To soil, tarnish, or besmirch. Vandals had **sullied** the marble headstones with spray paint.

tactile

tak' tl

adj. Relating to or perceptible by the sense of touch. Braille employs **tactile** symbols that enable people who are blind to read with their fingers.



.....
While your partner's eyes are closed, move a pencil to a different location on the desk, and then ask your partner to find the pencil using only tactile skills.

upbraid

up brād'

v. To scold or criticize severely; to find fault with. Mr. Hitzman was a martinet who often **upbraided** his students for not working hard enough.

verdant

vərd' nt

adj. Green with vegetation; covered with green plants. The Green Mountains are a fitting name for the **verdant** hills of Vermont.



.....
Share with your partner a verdant place you enjoy visiting.

vertex

vɜr' teks

n. The point opposite and farthest from the base; summit. The **vertex** of the Great Pyramid is 450 feet above the base.



.....
With your partner, try to balance a book on the vertex of your body.

10A**Determining Precise Meaning**

Choose the most accurate paraphrase for each sentence.

- Attrition** took its toll on the army.
 - Poor morale** took its toll on the army.
 - Dwindling numbers** took its toll on the army.
- You're looking at the **vertex** of the Washington Monument.
 - You're looking at the **public entryway** of the Washington Monument.
 - You're looking at the **highest point** of the Washington Monument.
- Ty's announcement was greeted with **opprobrium**.
 - Ty's announcement was greeted with **enthusiasm**.
 - Ty's announcement was greeted with **contempt**.

4. The artist painted a **verdant** landscape.
 - (a) The artist painted a **green and fertile** landscape.
 - (b) The artist painted a **moonlit** landscape.
5. The track meet ended in a **debacle**.
 - (a) The track meet ended in a **loud argument about the rightful winners**.
 - (b) The track meet ended in a **new speed record**.
6. The **proviso** required the partners to share their net worth.
 - (a) The **judge** required the partners to share their net worth.
 - (b) The **legal restriction** required the partners to share their net worth.
7. The coach **upbraided** Oliver for his passes during the game.
 - (a) The coach **berated** Oliver for his passes during the game.
 - (b) The coach **praised** Oliver for his passes during the game.
8. The English professor makes an effort to avoid **hackneyed** expressions.
 - (a) The English professor makes an effort to avoid **overused** expressions.
 - (b) The English professor makes an effort to avoid **morally offensive** expressions.
9. The acidic concoction was used to **defoliate** plant life.
 - (a) The acidic concoction was used to **invigorate** plant life.
 - (b) The acidic concoction was used to **destroy** plant life.
10. The poems have a quality that is almost **tactile**.
 - (a) The poems have a quality that is almost **childlike in its simplicity**.
 - (b) The poems have a quality that is almost **felt through the fingertips**.
11. The patient is suffering from **amnesia**.
 - (a) The patient is suffering from **the loss of a limb**.
 - (b) The patient is suffering from **memory loss**.
12. Certain passages in the document were **expunged**.
 - (a) Certain passages in the document were **completely erased**.
 - (b) Certain passages in the document were **emphasized**.
13. No one could **appease** the crying baby.
 - (a) No one could **satisfy** the crying baby.
 - (b) No one could **feed** the crying baby.
14. These revelations will **sully** his reputation.
 - (a) These revelations will **enhance** his reputation.
 - (b) These revelations will **damage** his reputation.
15. She wore a costume suitable for an **equestrian**.
 - (a) She wore a costume suitable for a **person who rides horses**.
 - (b) She wore a costume suitable for a **circus clown**.

amnesia
appease
attrition
debacle
defoliate
equestrian
expunge
hackneyed
opprobrium
proviso
sully
tactile
upbraid
verdant
vertex

10B

Understanding Word Relationships

Circle the letter next to each correct answer. There may be more than one correct answer.

1. Which word or words are related to *highest*?
 - (a) zenith
 - (b) apex
 - (c) vertex
 - (d) debacle
2. Which word or words are related to *contempt*?
 - (a) opprobrium
 - (b) defoliate
 - (c) disparage
 - (d) malign
3. Which word or words are related to *commonplace*?
 - (a) crafty
 - (b) hackneyed
 - (c) equestrian
 - (d) queasy
4. Which word or words are related to *bring peace*?
 - (a) fabricate
 - (b) appease
 - (c) alleviate
 - (d) upbraid
5. Which word or words are related to *scold*?
 - (a) expunge
 - (b) berate
 - (c) upbraid
 - (d) reprimand
6. Which word or words are related to *sensory*?
 - (a) tactile
 - (b) audible
 - (c) hackneyed
 - (d) itinerant
7. Which word or words are related to *besmirch*?
 - (a) survive
 - (b) appease
 - (c) sully
 - (d) reciprocate

8. Which word or words are related to *remove completely*?

- (a) annihilate
- (b) expunge
- (c) fabricate
- (d) defoliate

9. Which word or words are related to *failure*?

- (a) vow
- (b) vertex
- (c) debacle
- (d) vertigo

10. Which word or words are related to *horses*?

- (a) equine
- (b) groom
- (c) lilliputian
- (d) disk

10C

Word Study: Synonyms and Antonyms

Each group of words contains two words that are either synonyms or antonyms. Circle them. Then circle S if they are synonyms or A if they are antonyms.

1. nascent	incipient	eclectic	famous	S	A
2. abstruse	munificent	inveterate	stingy	S	A
3. equestrian	hackneyed	original	convivial	S	A
4. repulse	upbraid	sully	praise	S	A
5. comport	defoliate	appease	provoke	S	A
6. reciprocity	fabrication	discretion	falsehood	S	A
7. usurp	relinquish	deny	correlate	S	A
8. propitious	enthralled	enamored	hapless	S	A
9. abstruse	cavalier	absurd	recondite	S	A
10. presage	foreshadow	careen	expound	S	A

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vertex

10D

Understanding Contextual Meanings

Read the following sentences. If the word in bold is used correctly, write C on the line. If the word is used incorrectly, write a new sentence using the word correctly.

1. The **proviso** required all members to contribute equally.

2. Aphids **defoliated** acres of growing crops.

3. The patriots' **verdant** spirits kept the revolution alive.

4. Losing forty-nine out of fifty states was a monumental **debacle** for the political candidate.

5. **Amnesia** was the food of the gods on Mount Olympus.

6. The warm asparagus is **expunged** in cold water to stop it from cooking.

7. **Attrition** was high during the American Revolution because of widespread frostbite.

8. Jumping into the icy lake was a **tactile** shock.

9. The ship was sucked into the **vertex** and almost didn't make it out.

10. The demand to ban all foreign goods was greeted with **opprobrium**.

The Wall

The Vietnam War had devastating repercussions for millions of Americans and others involved in the conflict. It began innocuously enough in 1956 when American military advisers were sent to South Vietnam to aid its government against the communist opposition. This opposition was supported by North Vietnam, which was already governed by a communist regime. By the late 1960s, the United States was deeply involved in what had become a war of **attrition**, measured by daily “body counts” as each side hoped to exhaust the other into giving up. Fifty-eight thousand Americans died in the war and almost a third of a million were wounded. As many as two million Vietnamese lives may have been lost, including those of many thousands of civilians. The country was devastated by intensive bombing and by highly toxic chemical **defoliation** intended to eliminate the cover of trees and other vegetation. The war is estimated to have cost U.S. taxpayers about two hundred billion dollars. It ended in 1975 with a North Vietnamese victory.

A total of 2.7 million American men and women had served in Vietnam. As they returned home, a planeload at a time, they were not generally given the hero’s welcome that Americans returning from previous wars had received. Instead, they were met by a public deeply divided over the merits of the war. Many Americans found it difficult to show support for those who had fought in a war they believed was wrong, even though most veterans had been compelled to serve. Some soldiers were even **upbraided** as war criminals and murderers by extreme opponents of the war. Veterans were hurt and confused by the **opprobrium** they encountered.

Some retreated into silence but were unable to **expunge** the horrific experiences of the war from their memories. In contrast, a public **amnesia** regarding the war developed. Many Americans were unwilling to confront the war’s many painful issues: its tremendous human and material costs, the animosity between its opponents and supporters, and the fact that the American side was defeated.

In the late 1970s, veterans of the Vietnam War started a fund for construction of a memorial to those who had died. They raised nearly nine million dollars through private donations and held a competition to select a design for it, with the **proviso** that the memorial express no political view of the war.

Maya Lin was a twenty-one-year-old architecture student at Yale University when one of her professors required that his students submit a proposal for the design competition for the memorial. The popular conception of a war memorial recalled the heroic **equestrian** statues of Civil War generals. In Lin’s opinion, however, such **hackneyed** representations were a simplification of the war. Her design called for two triangular walls of polished black granite to be built into the earth, set in the shape of a shallow V. Carved into the stone would be the names of all the men and women killed in the war or still missing, in chronological order by the date of their

amnesia

appease

attrition

debacle

defoliate

equestrian

expunge

hackneyed

opprobrium

proviso

sully

tactile

upbraid

verdant

vertex

death or disappearance. The wall would increase in height as one descended until, at its **vertex**, where the trench is deepest, it would be ten feet high. Visitors to the memorial would be able to run their fingers over the names of loved ones. This **tactile** quality was to become an important aspect of Lin's work.

Congress had already chosen a **verdant** stretch of ground between the Lincoln Memorial and the Capitol as the site of the memorial. In the spring of 1981, the judges of the competition, after evaluating the 1,421 entries, declared Maya Lin's proposal the winner. The vote was unanimous, but the public's reaction to the design, reflecting their ambivalence about the war itself, was sharply divided. Those opposing it called it "a degrading ditch" and "a wall of shame" that **sullied** the memory of those who had died. They wanted a memorial that would honor the dead. To **appease** the critics, a bronze statue of three larger-than-life soldiers was placed near the entrance, and a second statue, of three servicewomen, was added later.

Despite the initial criticism, Lin's wall, dedicated in 1982, has been a focal point for national discussion of the war. The memorial draws over a million visitors a year, more than any other site in the nation's capital. It is a powerful tribute to the fallen, from Harry C. Cramer, an army captain killed during a training action in 1957, to Richard Van de Geer, killed on May 15, 1975, during the **debacle** of the war's final days as the last Americans fled the country. Many are moved to tears by their visit. Lin has said that the wall "was not meant to be cheerful or happy, but to bring out in people the realization of loss and a cathartic healing process." Perhaps she has succeeded in her aim.

► **Answer each question with a sentence. If a question does not contain a word from the lesson, use one in your answer. Use each word only once.**

1. Why is it unlikely that Vietnam was **verdant** at the end of the war?

2. How do you know the war did not end in **appeasement**?

3. Why is the war called "a war of **attrition**"?

4. What is suggested by the statement, "a public **amnesia** regarding the war developed"?

5. How do you know that many American civilians felt **opprobrium** for the war?

6. Where would the names of those who died at the war's midpoint be found on the Vietnam Memorial today?

7. Why do you think Maya Lin incorporated a **tactile** quality into her design of the memorial?

8. What was wrong with Lin's memorial in the eyes of her critics?

9. What was the **proviso** for those submitting designs for the memorial?

10. Is it possible that Lin's idea for the memorial could become **hackneyed**? Explain.

Fun & Fascinating FACTS

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• The Greek *mnestos* means "remembered" and combines with the Greek prefix *a-*, "not," to form **amnesia**. A person suffering from this condition cannot remember.
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• A *hackney* was once a horse one rented. A **hackneyed** horse later referred to one worn out through excessive use. Today, the word refers to sayings or ideas that are similarly worn out.

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