

Definitions

Note the spelling, pronunciation, part(s) of speech, and definition(s) of each of the following words. Then write the appropriate form of the word in the blank spaces in the illustrative sentence(s) following. Finally, study the lists of synonyms and antonyms.

1. adapt
(ə dapt')

(v.) to adjust or change to suit conditions

As anyone who moves to a new home can tell you, it takes time to _____ to new surroundings.

SYNONYMS: regulate, alter, acclimate; ANTONYM: remain unchanged

2. attest
(ə test')

(v.) to bear witness, affirm to be true or genuine

I can _____ to the truth of her story because I, too, saw what happened.

SYNONYMS: witness, verify, confirm, corroborate
ANTONYMS: deny, disprove, refute, rebut

3. dovetail
(dəv' tāl)

(v.) to fit together exactly; to connect so as to form a whole;
(n.) a carpentry figure resembling a dove's tail

We may be able to _____ our activities with theirs if we all plan ahead.

We examined the fine _____ the carpenter used to construct the antique chest.

SYNONYMS: (v.) mesh, jive, harmonize
ANTONYMS: (v.) clash, be at odds

4. enormity
(i nôr' mə tē)

(n.) the quality of exceeding all moral bounds; an exceedingly evil act; huge size, immensity

The _____ of the disaster shocked and saddened the nation.

SYNONYMS: heinousness, atrocity, vastness
ANTONYMS: mildness, harmlessness, innocuousness

5. falter
(fôl' tər)

(v.) to hesitate, stumble, lose courage; to speak hesitatingly; to lose drive, weaken, decline

The newscaster's voice _____ as he announced to the nation that the president was dead.

SYNONYM: waver; ANTONYMS: persevere, plug away at

6. foreboding
(fôr bō' dīŋ)

(n.) a warning or feeling that something bad will happen;
(adj.) marked by fear, ominous

As the hurricane neared, residents of towns along the coast were filled with _____.

All through that long and sleepless night, I was troubled by _____ thoughts.

SYNONYMS: (n.) presentiment, premonition

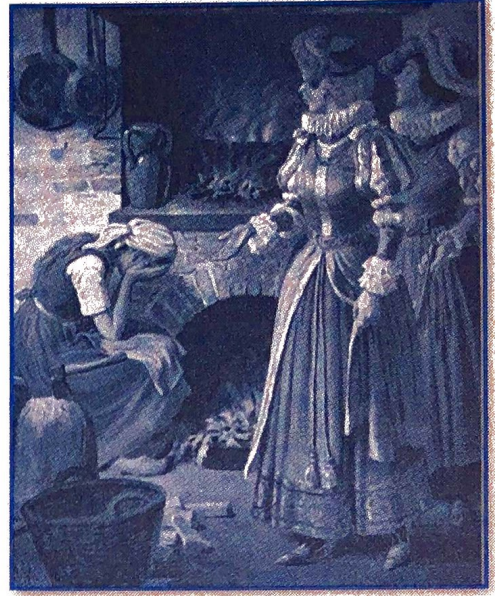
- 7. forlorn**
(fôr lôrn')
- (*adj.*) totally abandoned and helpless; sad and lonely; wretched or pitiful; almost hopeless
- When my best friend moved to another state halfway across the country, I felt extremely _____.
- SYNONYMS: woebegone, forsaken, bereft, pathetic
ANTONYMS: jaunty, buoyant, blithe, chipper
- 8. haughty**
(hô' tē)
- (*adj.*) chillingly proud and scornful
- The _____ tone of voice in which you refused my invitation offended me deeply.
- SYNONYMS: disdainful, supercilious
ANTONYMS: meek, humble, unassuming, modest
- 9. impediment**
(im ped' ə mənt)
- (*n.*) a physical defect; a hindrance, obstacle
- You must not let _____ in your path keep you from pursuing your dreams.
- SYNONYMS: obstruction, stumbling block
ANTONYMS: help, advantage, asset, plus
- 10. imperative**
(im per' ə tiv)
- (*adj.*) necessary, urgent; (*n.*) a form of a verb expressing a command; that which is necessary or required
- If you step on a rusty nail, it is _____ that you see a doctor as soon as possible.
- The writing of a thank-you note to acknowledge a gift or act of kindness is a social _____.
- SYNONYMS: (*adj.*) essential, indispensable
ANTONYMS: (*adj.*) nonessential, unnecessary, optional
- 11. loiter**
(loi' tər)
- (*v.*) to linger in an aimless way, hang around, dawdle
- Some students always _____ in the school yard long after classes are over for the day.
- ANTONYM: hurry along
- 12. malingering**
(mə liŋ' gər)
- (*v.*) to pretend illness to avoid duty or work, lie down on the job
- If you _____ too often, no one will believe you when you really do fall ill.
- SYNONYMS: goof off, shirk
- 13. pithy**
(pith' ē)
- (*adj.*) short but full of meaning
- A good editorial should be _____.
- SYNONYMS: terse, short and sweet, meaty, telling
ANTONYMS: wordy, verbose, long-winded, foolish, inane

- 14. plunder**
(plən' dər)
(v.) to rob by force, especially during wartime; to seize wrongfully; (n.) property stolen by force
In the Old West, rustlers _____ ranches and farms for cattle and horses.
Thieves often use a third party called a *fence* to sell jewelry and other _____.
SYNONYMS: (v.) pillage, loot, sack; (n.) spoils, pelf
- 15. simper**
(sim' pər)
(v.) to smile or speak in a silly, forced way; (n.) a silly, forced smile
Strangers may find it easier to _____ about trivial matters than to have a serious conversation.
The camera caught me with a _____ on my face.
SYNONYMS: (v.) snicker, titter, giggle
- 16. steadfast**
(sted' fast)
(adj.) firmly fixed; constant, not moving or changing
I urge you to be _____ in your efforts to achieve your goals in life.
SYNONYMS: loyal, faithful
ANTONYMS: inconstant, fickle, unreliable, vacillating
- 17. vaunted**
(vônt' id)
(adj.) much boasted about in a vain or swaggering way
The rookie's _____ strength was no match for the veteran's skill and experience.
SYNONYMS: trumpeted, heralded
ANTONYMS: downplayed, soft-pedaled, de-emphasized
- 18. vilify**
(vil' ə fī)
(v.) to abuse or belittle unjustly or maliciously
Voters have become thoroughly disgusted with candidates who _____ their rivals' reputations.
SYNONYMS: malign, defame, denigrate, traduce
ANTONYMS: glorify, extol, lionize
- 19. waif**
(wāf)
(n.) a person (usually a child) without a home or friend; a stray person or animal; something that comes along by chance, a stray bit
The spunky _____ who triumphs over many hardships is a popular character in film and fiction.
SYNONYMS: stray, urchin
- 20. wry**
(rī)
(adj.) twisted, turned to one side; cleverly or grimly humorous
Charles Addams was famous for _____ cartoons chronicling the adventures of a ghoulish family.
SYNONYMS: dryly amusing, droll
ANTONYMS: humorless, solemn, straight

Choosing the Right Word

Select the **boldface** word that better completes each sentence. You might refer to the passage on pages 164–165 to see how most of these words are used in context.

- Most people know the story of Cinderella, a poor, mistreated (**waif, impediment**) who marries a prince and lives happily ever after.
- Your outstanding report card and teacher evaluations (**attest, adapt**) to the fact that when you apply yourself, you can be successful.
- Many ad campaigns deliberately (**loiter, vaunt**) the superiority of a product over all its competition.
- The (**foreboding, enormity**) of the construction project will provide hundreds of jobs for people over the next five years.
- People who migrate from the suburbs to the city often find it difficult to (**adapt, dovetail**) to the noise and crowded conditions.
- Thinking it no crime to borrow from the past, Elizabethan dramatists often (**vilified, plundered**) ancient writings for suitable plots.
- In the opening scene of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, there is a strong sense of (**foreboding, enormity**) that something terrible is going to happen.
- The police sometimes use laws against (**faltering, loitering**) to prevent the gathering of unruly crowds.
- No matter how well qualified you may be, an inability to get on well with other people will prove a serious (**imperative, impediment**) in any field of work.
- Mutual respect and understanding among all racial and ethnic groups remains a(n) (**imperative, waif**) in the life of this nation.
- The (**pithy, haughty**) advice given by Ben Franklin in *Poor Richard's Almanac* has rarely been equaled for its good common sense.
- Despite our own exhaustion, we made one final, (**pithy, forlorn**) attempt to save the drowning swimmer, but our efforts were to no avail.
- Monday morning seems to be a favorite time for the employees to practice the fine art of (**foreboding, malingering**).
- I believe that it is (**adapt, imperative**) that we protect our lakes, rivers, and wetlands, as they provide us with clean drinking water.
- "I did what I thought best at the time," the president replied, "and I deeply resent their cowardly attempts to (**vilify, plunder**) my actions."



Versions of Cinderella's tale have been told around the world for hundreds of years.

16. Ample food supplies in the United States (**attest, vilify**) to the abilities of American farmers.
17. For a time, it was fashionable for supermodels to look like (**waifs, loiterers**), but that undernourished look has lost its appeal.
18. To (**simper, falter**) now, at the very threshold of victory, would mean that all our earlier struggles and sacrifices had been in vain.
19. When she learned that she had not been chosen for the job, she made a (**wry, forlorn**) joke, but this did not conceal her deep disappointment.
20. His (**haughty, steadfast**) attitude toward those he considered "beneath him" was a sure sign of lack of breeding and simple good manners.
21. The director told him to smile like a "dashing man about town," but all he could do was (**adapt, simper**) like a confused freshman.
22. Political leaders should feel free to change their minds on specific issues while remaining (**steadfast, wry**) in their support of their principles.
23. Hordes of savage barbarians swept into the province, committing one (**impediment, enormity**) after another on the defenseless population.
24. The temperaments of the partners in the business (**dovetail, attest**) so well that they can work together without the slightest friction or conflict.
25. Dexter, our beagle, looks so (**vilified, forlorn**) when we leave him behind.

Synonyms

Choose the word from this Unit that is the same or most nearly the same in meaning as the **boldface** word or expression in the phrase. Write that word on the line. Use a dictionary if necessary.

1. not permitted to **tarry** after dark _____
2. **unwavering** devotion to the struggle for equality _____
3. the **proclaimed** excellence of the new software _____
4. no tolerance for those who **play hooky** _____
5. **ransacked** the enemy's camp _____
6. misinterpreted his **tongue-in-cheek** comments _____
7. distributed warm clothing to the **ragamuffins** _____
8. when complete bed rest is **mandatory** _____
9. told us they had grave **misgivings** _____
10. often **smirks** when embarrassed _____



Antonyms

Choose the word from this Unit that is most nearly opposite in meaning to the **boldface** word or expression in the phrase. Write that word on the line. Use a dictionary if necessary.

1. the **socialite** who lived in a mansion _____
2. a **promising** proposal for a business _____
3. **glowering** at the loud customer _____
4. **discounted** the news of a product recall _____
5. **working hard** on the new job _____



Completing the Sentence

From the words in this Unit, choose the one that best completes each of the following sentences. Write the correct word form in the space provided.

1. It is _____ for us to produce automobiles that will give us better gas mileage and cause less pollution.
2. The testimony of all the witnesses _____ neatly, forming a strong case against the accused.
3. I appreciate that when I asked for your opinion, you gave it in a few clear, direct, and _____ sentences.
4. When we missed those early foul shots, I had a(n) _____ that the game was going to be a bad one for our team.
5. The comedian specialized in the kind of _____ humor that gets quiet chuckles from an audience, rather than loud bursts of laughter.
6. The _____ of the crimes the Nazis committed in the concentration camps horrified the world.
7. In every war, many children are separated from their parents and become homeless _____, begging for food and shelter.
8. The quick recovery of so many patients _____ to the skill of the hospital staff.
9. Her _____ manner said more clearly than words that she could never associate as an equal with a "peasant" like me.
10. Through all the shocks and trials of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln never _____ in his determination to save the Union.

11. Why is it that people tend to _____ in groups in the middle of the sidewalk, blocking the flow of pedestrian traffic?
12. After the official had fallen from power, his policies were ridiculed, his motives questioned, and his character _____.
13. Unless you take steps now to correct your speech _____, it will be a serious hindrance to you throughout your life.
14. Great skill is required to _____ a novel or short story for the screen.
15. When she attempted to order the meal in French, we discovered that her much _____ knowledge of that language made no impression at all on the waiter.
16. When he was caught red-handed in the act of going through my papers, all he did was stand there and _____ foolishly.
17. A fearful young recruit may _____ in an attempt to avoid dangerous duty.
18. They remained my _____ friends, even at a time when it might have been to their advantage to have nothing to do with me.
19. The _____ expressions on the faces of the starving children moved TV audiences to pity and indignation at their plight.
20. During our absence, a hungry bear invaded the campsite and _____ our food supply.

Writing: Words in Action

1. Look back at “Steven P. Jobs: 1955–2011” (pages 164–165). What lessons about applying your talent and creativity can you learn from Steve Jobs? How can he be an inspiration for you? Using details from the passage, write a brief tribute to Steve Jobs addressing these questions. Include at least two details from the passage and three Unit words.
2. Consider how contemporary society would be different without devices such as the personal computer, the smartphone, portable MP3 players, tablets and e-readers, or similar products. In a brief essay, describe some of the ways—both positive and negative—that these high-tech products have had an impact on the way we live today. Support your views with evidence from the reading (refer to pages 164–165) or from your own knowledge or experience. Write at least three paragraphs, and use three or more words from this Unit.

Vocabulary in Context

Literary Text

The following excerpts are from *Silas Marner* and *The Mill on the Floss* by George Eliot. Some of the words you have studied in this Unit appear in **boldface** type. Complete each statement below the excerpt by circling the letter of the correct answer.

1. Jem could be found and made to restore the money: Marner did not want to punish him, but only to get back his gold which had gone from him, and left his soul like a **forlorn** traveler on an unknown desert. (*Silas Marner*)

Someone who is **forlorn** is NOT

- a. exhausted c. worried
b. helpless d. joyful
2. For how was it possible to believe that those large brown protuberant eyes in Silas Marner's pale face really saw nothing very distinctly that was not close to them, and not rather that their dreadful stare could dart cramp, or rickets, or a **wry** mouth at any boy who happened to be in the rear? (*Silas Marner*)

Something that is **wry** is

- a. sad c. fearless
b. mocking d. tender
3. Not a word was spoken . . . when Maggie, who had been looking straight before her all the while, turned again to walk back, saying, with **haughty** resentment, "There is no need for me to go any farther." (*The Mill on the Floss*)

A **haughty** manner is

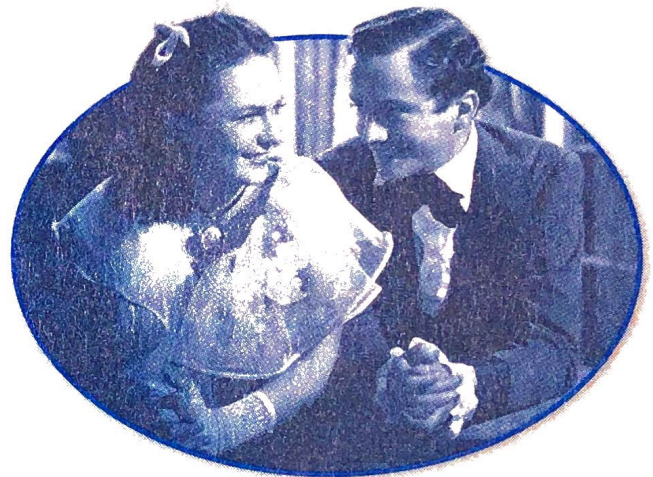
- a. noble c. arrogant
b. playful d. composed
4. "You understand book keeping?"
"No," said Tom, rather **falteringly**. "I was in Practice. But Mr. Stelling says I write a good hand, uncle." (*The Mill on the Floss*)

A person who speaks **falteringly** does so with

- a. hesitation c. fear
b. vigor d. humor
5. Mr. Tulliver threw himself back in his chair; his mind, which had so long been the home of nothing but bitter discontent and **foreboding**, suddenly filled, by the magic of joy, with visions of good fortune. (*The Mill on the Floss*)

A **foreboding** is a(n)

- a. wish c. annoyance
b. pleasure d. warning



Geraldine Fitzgerald and Frank Lawton played Maggie and Philip in the 1937 film *The Mill on the Floss*.

Interactive
Quiz



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