

Lesson 11

Word List

Study the definitions of the words below; then do the exercises for the lesson.

augment

ôg ment'

v. To increase in size, amount, or degree.

In order to buy a new bike before summer, Iris **augmented** her savings by baby-sitting the twins next door.

benign

bi nîn'

adj. 1. Kind; gracious; gentle.

Friendly nurses were a **benign** presence in the hospital.

2. Favorable; not threatening.

Although the weather had been **benign** when Harry and Laura had sailed out onto the lake in the morning, by noon, conditions had changed dramatically.

connoisseur

kân ə sur'

n. A person with extensive knowledge, especially of the fine arts; a person of refined taste. A **connoisseur** of rare stamps would recognize the famous English "penny black" at once.

discern

di surn'

v. 1. To detect with the eyes.

About forty-five minutes after the ferry left Block Island, the passengers could **discern** the coast of Rhode Island before them.

2. To understand or comprehend.

Not until she finished the novel did Janice **discern** the significance of the title.

3. To recognize as separate or different.

We made certain we could easily **discern** our luggage by putting red tape on the handle.

discerning adj. Having good judgment; perceptive.

Virginia's **discerning** comments about Jay's serve helped him to improve his tennis game.

embellish

em bel' ish

v. 1. To make beautiful by adding decorative elements.

The entire surface of the black cloth had been **embellished** with colored threads stitched in elaborate patterns.

2. To add fictitious details to.

Mark Twain often **embellished** his stories to make them more interesting.

execute

ek' sə kyoot

v. 1. To carry out; to perform.

The driving instructor told me to **execute** a U-turn.

2. To create, as a work of art.

These paintings of William Merritt Chase were **executed** in oils during his summers at Shinnecock, Long Island.

3. To put to death as a legal penalty.

Executing criminals condemned to death is a controversial practice.

exemplify

ek zem' pli fi

v. To illustrate by being an example of.

The poetry of Langston Hughes **exemplifies** some of the best work of the writers of the Harlem Renaissance.

grotesque

grō tesk'

adj. So distorted or strange as to appear bizarre or comical.

The **grotesque** masks worn by the dancers frightened the children.

hallowed

hal' őd

adj. Greatly respected; holy; sacred.Arlington National Cemetery is **hallowed** ground because it is the burial place for soldiers who have died in war.**impersonate**

im pər' sə nāt

v. 1. To assume the character or appearance of.The solution to the mystery became clear to the detective when he learned that one woman had **impersonated** another when renting the apartment.

2. To mimic.

I tried to **impersonate** my mother when I answered the phone.**malevolent**

mə lev' ə lənt

adj. Showing ill will or hatred; producing harm or evil.Iago's **malevolent** plan to encourage Othello's jealousy resulted in murder and suicide.**malevolence** *n.* A feeling or expression of ill will.The look of **malevolence** in his eyes sent shudders down our spines.**ornate**

ōr nāt'

adj. Heavily and elaborately decorated.The tour guide pointed out the **ornate** carving over the arched doorway.**pastoral**

pas' tər əl

adj. 1. Having to do with shepherds and herders.The Industrial Revolution contributed to the disappearance of a **pastoral** way of life.

2. Relating to country life, and often presented as charmingly simple.

Some of Corot's most appealing paintings are those that show **pastoral** scenes.**precarious**

prē kar' ē əs

adj. Not safe or secure; dangerously uncertain.Having cut through the thick vines to get a better view of the waterfall, the hikers did not understand how **precarious** their situation was until they tried to return to the trail and could not find it.**renown**

rē nōn'

n. Fame; honor.Sir Laurence Olivier, a British actor who died in 1989, achieved **renown** for his roles in Shakespeare's plays.**renowned** *adj.* Famous; honored.Samuel Johnson was a **renowned** literary figure in eighteenth-century England.

11A Finding Meanings

Choose two phrases to form a sentence that correctly uses a word from Word List 11. Write each sentence in the space provided.

1. (a) one that is friendly or kind.

(b) A grotesque expression is

(c) A benign expression is

(d) one that is meant to deceive.

2. (a) add decoration to it.

(b) To embellish something is to

(c) take care of it.

(d) To discern something is to

3. (a) one that is nonexistent. (c) A hallowed location is
(b) one that is insecure. (d) A precarious location is
4. (a) To exemplify something is to (c) To impersonate something is to
(b) be a good example of it. (d) be frustrated by it.
5. (a) To augment something (c) To discern something
(b) is to be unaware of it. (d) is to notice it.
6. (a) that has some practical use. (c) A hallowed object is one
(b) that is regarded as sacred. (d) An ornate object is one
7. (a) Renown is (c) a show of understanding.
(b) Malevolence is (d) a feeling of intense ill will.
8. (a) that is made of precious metal. (c) that is heavily decorated.
(b) An ornate object is one (d) A grotesque object is one
9. (a) To impersonate someone (c) is to show admiration for that person.
(b) is to put that person to death. (d) To execute someone

augment

benign

connoisseur

discern

embellish

execute

exemplify

grotesque

hallowed

impersonate

malevolent

ornate

pastoral

precarious

renown

10. (a) is one that is famous. (c) A pastoral novel
(b) A renowned novel (d) is one whose author is unknown.

11B Just the Right Word

Improve each of the following sentences by crossing out the bold phrase and replacing it with a word (or a form of the word) from Word List 11.

- Luciano Pavarotti's **world-wide reputation** makes him easily recognizable.
- Mirta **increased the size of** her wardrobe by making several dresses during summer vacation.

3. At the costume shop, we found just the mask we wanted—one with **horribly distorted** features and green hair.
4. Even critics who were **able to perceive small differences** could not tell that the painting was a fake.
5. It is a crime to **dress up as and pretend to be** a police officer.
6. Peggy Guggenheim was well known as a **person who was both knowledgeable about and had a love** of modern art.
7. The arch is a **good example of what is distinctive about** Roman architecture.
8. Simone **added a few extra details to** her account of the dog's rescue, suggesting that her own role had been crucial.
9. Even though Alberto Giacometti **gave final form to** hundreds of sculptures, he never felt they fully expressed what he meant.
10. In **The Winter's Tale**, Shakespeare alternates scenes in a **simple and unaffected country** setting with those in the splendid palace of the king.

11C Applying Meanings

Circle the letter of each correct answer to the questions below.
Questions may have more than one correct answer.

1. Which of the following might be present in a **pastoral** scene?
(a) a shepherd (c) a stream
(b) a meadow (d) a skyscraper
2. Which of the following can be **ornate**?
(a) a design (c) an ordeal
(b) a brooch (d) an inkling
3. Which of the following can be **discerned**?
(a) a slight fault (c) a slight difference
(b) a slight movement (d) an opportunity
4. Which of the following can be **executed**?
(a) a portrait (c) a dance step
(b) a person (d) an order

5. Which of the following can be **malevolent**?

- (a) an odor (c) a grin
(b) a pseudonym (d) a person

6. Which of the following can be **impersonated**?

- (a) a friend's grades (c) a friend's voice
(b) a friend's brother (d) a friend's walk

7. Which of the following can be **hallowed**?

- (a) a person's name (c) a battlefield
(b) a place of worship (d) a person's memory

8. Which of the following can be **benign**?

- (a) an expression (c) a growth on the skin
(b) a tirade (d) a climate

11D Word Study

Each group of four words below contains two words that are either synonyms or antonyms. Circle these two words, then circle the S if they are synonyms, the A if they are antonyms.

augment
benign
connoisseur
discern
embellish
execute
exemplify
grotesque
hallowed
impersonate
malevolent
ornate
pastoral
precarious
renown

| | | | | | |
|--------------|----------|--------------|-----------|---|---|
| 1. secure | benign | precarious | agile | S | A |
| 2. turmoil | banter | audacity | tumult | S | A |
| 3. intricate | unseemly | appropriate | mild | S | A |
| 4. humdrum | inane | electrifying | offensive | S | A |
| 5. kind | ornate | benevolent | bizarre | S | A |
| 6. languish | simplify | impersonate | embellish | S | A |
| 7. avid | agile | intricate | ornate | S | A |
| 8. foolish | balmy | turbulent | gruesome | S | A |
| 9. atrocious | fitful | commendable | crucial | S | A |
| 10. slovenly | audible | fastidious | copious | S | A |

11E Passage

Read the passage below; then complete the exercise that follows.

The Kachina Dolls of Oraibi

The village of Oraibi lies in the middle of the four-thousand-square-mile Hopi Reservation in the northeast corner of Arizona. Believed to be the oldest continuously inhabited village in North America, it was first settled nearly a thousand years ago by the Anasazi, a **pastoral** people, who excelled in the creation of beautiful objects.

The descendants of the Anasazi, the Hopi people, now inhabit the area and continue the thousand-year-old tradition of making fine pottery, woven rugs, and baskets. But Hopi artistry is best **exemplified** by the unique form of carved wooden figures known as kachinas. These figures are sculpted from the root of the cottonwood tree and range in size from a few inches up to two feet. The heads often have **ornately** carved masks, while the finished figures are painted in bright colors and **embellished** with shells, feathers, and semiprecious stones.

The kachina carvings are representations of the Hopi spirit world. In the Hopi view, everything in the world is inhabited by a spirit; when people succeed in living in harmony and balance with the spirits, the world will be at peace. The carvings represent the spirits of **hallowed** figures from Hopi history as well as of plants and animals, the sun, the moon, and the stars.

From late December to late July, when the spirits are believed to be on Earth, the Hopi perform ceremonies in their villages. Masked and costumed dancers **impersonate** the spirits in celebrations held in their honor. Some of the dancers represent **benign**, gift-bearing kachinas who present children with carved dolls. These are not toys, for they have a religious and social significance, but neither are they worshiped as idols. They are hung on the walls of Hopi homes, and by learning what each kachina doll stands for, the children **discern** the history, codes of behavior, and religion of their people. Along with the gift-bearing kachinas, there are also representations of **malevolent** ones who dance through the village streets, supposedly searching for those in the community who have been disobedient. These demon kachinas are often **grotesque** in appearance, frightening to those who see them approaching.

Until the late nineteenth century, outside visitors were rare in Hopi villages; their inhabitants did not encourage such visits and the paths leading to the high, flat hilltops were very **precarious**. But once roads were built, access to the heights was easy; so the residents often were outnumbered by tourists who came to watch the religious ceremonies held in the spring and summer and to purchase kachina dolls as mementos. Hopi carvers, who once had made these dolls only for use in their own communities, stepped up production to meet the demand.

Gradually, the kachinas began to change. Tourists wanted larger carvings and figures showing action. The size of a kachina was **augmented** by the addition of other carved pieces attached by glue; and because many Hopi were opposed to the sale of their religious objects to outsiders, the figures were **executed** so that they differed from those used in Hopi ceremonies.

Today, many Hopi carvers continue the ancient tradition, using the same simple materials and tools of earlier generations. Collectors of Native American art purchase kachina dolls directly from these carvers or from gift shops that feature their work. Some carvers have achieved world **renown**, and their work commands prices in the thousands of dollars.

Connoisseurs of Hopi carving who travel to Oklahoma City will find over sixty Kachina dolls on permanent display at the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. In Phoenix, Arizona, the place to visit is the Heard Museum. It is famous for its collection of over four hundred dolls, many of them presented to the museum by Arizona's then Senator Barry Goldwater.

Answer each of the following questions in the form of a sentence. If a question does not contain a vocabulary word from this lesson's word list, use one in your answer. Use each word only once. Questions and answers will then contain all fifteen words (or forms of the words).

1. How do you know that Hopi dancers are not considered to be actual kachina spirits?

2. What is the purpose of the **malevolent** kachina dancers?

3. Before the end of the last century, why didn't many tourists visit the Hopi?

4. What detail tells you that the carvers spend a lot of time working on the heads of the dolls?

5. Why would it be inaccurate to say that the kachina dolls are very simple in style?

6. What is the meaning of **benign** as it is used in the passage?

7. How can people tell the difference between the demon kachina dancers and the gift-bearing kachina dancers?

8. Why did some Hopi oppose selling kachinas to outsiders?

9. How do you know that the ancestors of the Hopi raised sheep or goats?

10. What do the kachina carvings **exemplify**?

11. What is the meaning of **executed** as it is used in the passage?
12. What important role do kachina dolls play in the education of Hopi children?
13. Why is it likely that Barry Goldwater could have told you a lot about kachina carvings?
14. What change was made in the kachinas carved for outsiders?
15. Why do people visit the Hopi?

FUN & FASCINATING FACTS

The adjective **benign** is formed from the Latin *bene*, which means “well” or “good.” The antonym of this word is *malignant*, formed from the Latin *mal*, which means “bad” or “evil.”

A person seeing a doctor about a growth or tumor would be relieved to learn that it was *benign*; this would mean that it was harmless. The person would be very concerned if told the growth was *malignant*, for that would mean it was cancerous.

Malevolent is another word formed from the Latin *mal*. It is similar in meaning to *malicious*, but *malevolent* is a much stronger term. A *malicious* remark may hurt the person it is directed at, but could

be simply mischievous; whereas, a *malevolent* remark suggests strong hatred on the part of the person making it.

Pastor is another name for minister in many churches; the English word comes from the Latin *pastor*, “a shepherd.” The minister or pastor is looked upon by the congregation as a shepherd to his or her flock. The adjective formed from *pastor* is **pastoral**, which means “of or relating to country life, especially as it relates to the lives of shepherds and shepherdesses.” Pastoral scenes have long been a favorite of painters because the subject suggests a peaceful and simple way of life. A *pastoral* is a poem or other literary or artistic work dealing with the quiet life of the country.