

Lesson 1

Word List

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

bewail

bē wāl'

v. To express deep regret or sorrow over.

Many football fans **bewailed** the replacement of real grass by AstroTurf when the new stadium was built.

destitute

des' tə tōōt

adj. 1. Without resources or possessions, especially the necessities of life.

Winter is especially painful for **destitute** people in the cities of the Northeast.

2. Lacking; devoid of.

Staring at the blank sheet of paper on which I was supposed to write a poem, I found myself **destitute** of ideas.

destitution n.

Destitution caused by the mid-nineteenth-century potato famine forced many Irish families to seek better lives in the United States.

detract

dē trakt'

v. To take away, especially from the value, beauty, or importance of.

The addition of a modern family room **detracted** from the cozy style of the bungalow.

detractor n.

The plan's **detractors** were especially critical of the expected cost of the new town hall.

emancipate

ē man' sə pāt

v. To set free from slavery; to liberate.

Some teenagers feel **emancipated** when they get a driver's license.

emancipation n.

In 1863, Abraham Lincoln's **Emancipation** Proclamation stated that all slaves in the Confederacy were, from then on, free.

extol

ek stōl'

v. To praise highly.

The scout leader **extolled** the virtues of truth and honor.

flamboyant

flam bōi' ənt

adj. Excessively showy; unrestrained.

My conservative aunt considered her husband's brightly colored, boldly patterned necktie too **flamboyant** for the governor's reception.

flamboyance or **flamboyancy** n.

With an air of **flamboyance**, the actor flung out her arm and pointed to the door.

impetus

im' pə təs

n. 1. A driving force; anything that causes an action.

Her hope of winning an athletic scholarship provided the **impetus** for years of grueling training on the swim team.

2. Increased activity resulting from a driving force.

The drop in interest rates gave **impetus** to the real estate market after last year's slump in sales.

insuperable

in sœ' pər ə bəl

adj. Incapable of being overcome or defeated.

During my senior year, passing Greek seemed an **insuperable** obstacle to my graduating with my class.

intermittent

in tər mit' nt

adj. Not continuous; happening at intervals.

Showers were **intermittent** throughout the day, although the forecast had promised sunshine.

maxim
maks' im

n. A general truth or rule of conduct; a short saying.
Remember the **maxim** "Haste makes waste" and slow down!

obligatory
ə blig' ə tō' r ē

adj. Required or demanded.
Physical education is **obligatory** unless you have a medical excuse for skipping gym class.

plumb
plum

v. 1. To measure the depth of water.
The lake was too deep for us to **plumb**.
2. To reach the deepest part of.
The bathyscaphe is a vessel designed to **plumb** the oceans of the world.
3. To understand by examining closely; to solve.
Her latest book of poems is a valiant attempt to **plumb** the human soul.
adj. Straight up and down; vertical.
The bricklayer keeps checking to make sure that the wall being built is **plumb**.

vagabond
vag' ə bānd

n. A person who wanders from place to place.
He spent a few years as a **vagabond** before settling in a city and getting a job in a factory.
adj. The **vagabond** life of traveling musicians suited the members of the band.

visage
viz' ij

n. A face, especially one that expresses feelings.
The smiling **visage** of a young girl looked out from the portrait.

wheedle
hwēd' əl

v. 1. To coax by using sly persuasion or insincere praise.
He tried to **wheedle** his father into lending him the new sports car.
2. To gain by using sly persuasion or insincere praise.
The agent **wheeled** several thousand dollars from the couple for a life insurance policy that was practically worthless.

1A Understanding Meanings

Read the sentences below. If a sentence correctly uses the word in bold, write *C* on the line below it. If a sentence is incorrect, rewrite it so that the vocabulary word in bold is used correctly.

bewail
destitute
detract
emancipate
extol
flamboyant
impetus
insuperable
intermittent
maxim
obligatory
plumb
vagabond
visage
wheedle

1. To **emancipate** someone is to release that person.

2. An **obligatory** assignment is one that causes great hardship.

3. An **impetus** sets something into action.

4. To **plumb** a mystery is to understand it by thinking about it carefully.

5. A **vagabond** is a person who lacks the necessities of life.
6. To **wheedle** something from someone is to obtain it by cajoling that person into giving it.
7. To **extol** someone is to show very high regard for that person.
8. An **intermittent** noise is one that keeps stopping and starting.
9. A person's **visage** is that person's feelings about herself.
10. **Destitution** is the state of having all that one could ask for.
11. To **bewail** something is to complain about it.
12. A **detractor** is someone to whom another person is attracted.
13. If something is **insuperable**, its parts cannot be separated from the whole.
14. A **maxim** is the larger of two amounts.
15. **Flamboyance** is lack of restraint in one's dress or behavior.

1B Using Words

If the word (or a form of the word) in bold fits in a sentence in the group below it, write the word in the blank. If the word does not fit, leave the space empty.

1. **vagabond**

- (a) As actors in a traveling company, we led a _____ life.
- (b) A true _____ becomes restless after two weeks in one place.
- (c) I cashed in my _____ when I ran short of money.

2. **bewail**

- (a) When he cannot see Juliet, Romeo _____ his fate.
- (b) We must _____ them to try harder next time.
- (c) Did you _____ them of the news that we close permanently tomorrow?

3. **intermittent**

- (a) The _____ traffic noises from the city streets below disturbed my sleep.
- (b) The daily paper made _____ appearances on the newsstands.
- (c) What is the cause of these _____ oil leaks from the engine?

4. **extol**

- (a) She loves to _____ the virtues of small-town America.
- (b) The kidnappers attempted to _____ a million dollars from the wealthy family.
- (c) I will continue to _____ her to practice the piano.

5. **plumb**

- (a) Even Sherlock Holmes could not _____ this mystery.
- (b) When we built the house, we hired a technician to _____ the bathroom sink.
- (c) If the walls are not _____, the doors will not hang properly.

6. **destitute**

- (a) We had to admit that we were _____ of fresh ideas.
- (b) The mayor's council is making plans to help the city's _____ people.
- (c) The house is completely _____ and needs to be torn down.

7. **obligatory**

- (a) It is not _____ to have someone accompany you.
- (b) It is _____ to carry your driver's license when driving.
- (c) Stopping at a red light is _____ in all fifty states.

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8. emancipate

- (a) The recipe instructed cooks to _____ the cream before adding it to the melted chocolate.
- (b) I managed to _____ a hundred dollars from my uncle.
- (c) The candidate was unable to _____ more than fifty votes.

1C 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.

- | | | | |
|-------------|------------|---|---|
| 1. bewail | admit | | |
| pretend | celebrate | S | A |
| 2. precise | secret | | |
| wealthy | destitute | S | A |
| 3. estimate | detract | | |
| obtain | enhance | S | A |
| 4. enslave | provide | | |
| assist | emancipate | S | A |
| 5. extol | wheedle | | |
| praise | pause | S | A |
| 6. towering | active | | |
| shy | flamboyant | S | A |
| 7. coax | reward | | |
| wheedle | recover | S | A |
| 8. impetus | face | | |
| visage | payment | S | A |
| 9. heavy | deep | | |
| plumb | vertical | S | A |
| 10. smart | strict | | |
| voluntary | obligatory | S | A |

1D Images of Words

Circle the letter of each sentence that suggests the numbered bold vocabulary word. In each group, you may circle more than one letter or none at all.

1. wheedle

- (a) Fido stands by the door when he wants to be taken for a walk.
- (b) If you don't help me, I'll tell Mom who broke the window.
- (c) C'mon. You're my favorite aunt; please lend me the money!

2. destitution

- (a) Because of the financial catastrophe, the family had to rely temporarily on welfare benefits from the government.
- (b) The pain is in my lower back, doctor.
- (c) I can't believe you spent fifty dollars on comic books!

3. impetus

- (a) On the spur of the moment, I decided to join my sister in Maine.
- (b) I began to take music lessons after inheriting my grandfather's violin.
- (c) I worked all night in order to meet the nine o'clock deadline.

4. extol

- (a) Ah! There's nothing like fall in New England!
- (b) Maintaining a good diet and getting more exercise has made me feel really good.
- (c) The Rangers are formidable rivals this season.

5. detract

- (a) My father said I'd be doing myself a favor if I shaved off my beard.
- (b) He looked very well-groomed except for his muddy shoes.
- (c) I apologized for expressing my impatience with her slowness.

6. insuperable

- (a) There is no finer rose anywhere than the wild prairie rose.
- (b) No one has yet succeeded in rowing alone across the Pacific.
- (c) With five minutes to go, we were losing the basketball game by fifty points.

7. visage

- (a) My shoe size is 7 ½ narrow.
- (b) I could tell at once that my answer had made her happy.
- (c) From this spot, you can see for miles in all directions.

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8. **obligatory**

- (a) If you want to be on the committee, be at the next meeting.
- (b) Guests at White House state dinners must wear formal attire.
- (c) He finally had to admit that we were hopelessly lost.

9. **bewail**

- (a) Democracy doesn't work well with such a poor voter turnout.
- (b) From our cabin, we could hear the eerie howling of the wolves.
- (c) We'd all be better off if television had never been invented.

10. **maxim**

- (a) Neither a borrower nor a lender be.
- (b) Can you lend me five dollars until Friday?
- (c) Money burns a hole in his pocket.

1E Passage

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

Faces in the Mountain

Visitors to South Dakota find that a trip to Mount Rushmore is almost **obligatory**, for there they can see one of America's most awe-inspiring monuments. Carved into a granite mountainside, the colossal heads of four United States presidents are visible for a distance of sixty miles. Side by side, the **visages** of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt range from fifty to seventy feet in height. They are the work of the remarkable American sculptor and dramatic personality Gutzon Borglum.

Born in Idaho in 1867, Borglum led an artist's **vagabond** life in America and Europe for twenty years before settling in New York City in 1901. There, he soon achieved an international reputation as a sculptor. The idea that "Small is beautiful" would not have applied to Borglum; his view was that "Bigger is better." In fact, it's said that he complained, "There is not a monument in this country as big as a snuff box."

The **impetus** for the Mount Rushmore project came in 1926, when the state historian of South Dakota, knowing Borglum's views, invited him to create a monumental work of art for the Black Hills mountain region. Borglum accepted the challenge immediately, but the project he proposed did not meet with universal approval. Many felt that the carvings would **detract** from the area's natural beauty. Cora Johnson, a South Dakota journalist, expressed such feelings when she wrote: "Man makes statues, but God made the mountains. Leave them alone." Borglum, however, was not one to heed this advice.

The question of which national figures to honor caused much debate. Sioux Chief Red Cloud, who had fought against white encroachment on Native American lands, was one of the names proposed. Another was Susan B. Anthony, who had **bewailed** nineteenth-century women's lack of the right to vote in political elections, and led the struggle to **emancipate** them from this deprivation. The final decision, however, was left to Borglum. Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln were obvious choices, but Borglum had a personal reason for his fourth selection, a man of enormous energy who **extolled** physical fitness and vigorous activity. In his own life, Borglum strove to emulate his hero, so Theodore Roosevelt became the fourth figure honored at Mount Rushmore.

Money to pay for the project was a problem from the beginning, and work proceeded **intermittently**, especially after 1930, when the country was in the grip of the Great Depression. During those years, Borglum made frequent visits to the nation's capital seeking financial assistance. Loath to stoop to **wheeling**, the

sculptor managed to convince a reluctant Congress to provide funding to go on with the project. Nor was lack of funds the only problem Borglum had to grapple with. Because of the hard granite rock, the difficulties of carving out the faces had at first seemed **insuperable**, but Borglum solved the problem by exploding small charges of dynamite to remove pieces of rock. Under his supervision, workers in harnesses suspended from the mountaintop drilled, chipped, and chiseled away at the rock. So skillful was Borglum that his eye for precise measurement enabled him to tell if a line was **plumb** to a quarter of an inch.

During his lifetime, Borglum had earned enormous sums from the sale of his works. However, he did not embrace Benjamin Franklin's **maxim** "A penny saved is a penny earned." Instead, he lived a **flamboyant** lifestyle. His daughter, Mary Ellis, recalls: "He loved flashy cars and hired chauffeurs to drive them." So careless was he about money that he died **destitute** on March 6, 1941. It was left to his son Lincoln, who had assisted him throughout, to complete the Mount Rushmore memorial eight months later.

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.

1. Why might the original **detractors** of the Mount Rushmore project have a different view of it today?

2. Why would it be incorrect to refer to the Mount Rushmore sculptures as statues?

3. Why might a biographer of Borglum have difficulty describing what his subject was doing before 1901?

4. List two **maxims** that Borglum did not believe in.

5. Why was Susan B. Anthony considered a candidate for one of the places of honor on Mount Rushmore?

6. Why might Borglum's children have **bewailed** his **flamboyant** lifestyle?

7. What was the **impetus** for Borglum's trips to Washington, D.C., in the 1930s?

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8. What were some of the almost **insuperable** problems Borglum encountered with this project?
-
9. What skill did Borglum possess that would be especially useful when working on a large monument such as Mount Rushmore?
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10. How do you know that the state historian of South Dakota did not have to **wheedle** to get Borglum to take on the Mount Rushmore project?
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11. Why might Borglum's son have felt it was **obligatory** to complete the monument?
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FUN & FASCINATING FACTS

Flames attract attention because they are bright and keep changing shape as they appear to dance before our eyes. A **flamboyant** person is someone who attracts attention by behaving in a showy way. The word *flamboyant* itself reflects this. It comes from the French verb *flamboyer*, which means "to blaze."

The word *plumb* comes from the Latin *plumbum*, meaning "lead." A string with a lead weight attached to it is called a **plumb** line. It is lowered into the

water and plunges to the bottom, giving a measure of depth. Since the weight on a plumb line drops straight down, it can also be used to check whether something is vertical.

Two other words formed from this Latin root are *plumber*, a person who installs and repairs kitchen and bathroom pipes (which were once made of lead), and *plummet*, a verb meaning, "to fall straight down; to plunge."