

# Lesson 16

## Word List

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

**belated**

bē lāt' əd

*adj.* Done too late; having been delayed beyond the usual time.  
Kofi's **belated** birthday card arrived one month after my birthday.

**caliber**

kal' i bər

*n.* 1. Degree of importance or excellence.  
The college faculty is of the highest **caliber** and includes several Nobel Prize winners.  
2. The diameter of a bullet or inside of a gun barrel.  
A .45-**caliber** bullet is  $\frac{45}{100}$  of an inch in diameter.

**chagrin**

shə grin'

*n.* A feeling of embarrassment or annoyance caused by having failed or being disappointed.  
To my **chagrin** I twisted my ankle as I attempted to make a jump while skating.  
*v.* To cause to feel unease.  
I was quite **chagrined** by my date's failure to meet me as planned.

**contravene**

kən trə vēn'

*v.* To act against or be counter to.  
The personnel director reprimanded the employee for **contravening** the company policy of no smoking.

**default**

dē fōlt'

*n.* 1. Failure to do what is required by duty or law.  
When her opponent failed to appear, Nora won the chess game by **default**.  
2. An automatic selection made according to a computer program when the user does not make a choice.  
The **default** was to close the file before quitting.  
*v.* To fail to pay what or when one should.  
The bank will repossess the car if you **default** on your car loan.

**doldrums**

dōl' drəmz

*n. pl.* A condition of feeling sad, bored, or sluggish.  
I was in the **doldrums** about my career until I received an exciting job offer in Costa Rica.

**emblazon**

em blā' zən

*v.* To inscribe or decorate conspicuously.  
The team sponsor's name was **emblazoned** across the backs of the players' jerseys.

**eminent**

em' ə nənt

*adj.* Standing above others in worth, rank, or fame.  
In the late 1700s, **eminent** inventor and engineer Eli Whitney constructed the cotton gin, an invention that changed the way cotton crops were harvested.  
**eminence** *n.*  
Octavio Paz's **eminence** as a writer of Latin American literature has led to his books' inclusion on many college reading lists.

**expend**

ek spend'

*v.* To use up; consume.  
Sedentary office workers do not **expend** much physical energy on the job.

**expire**

ek spīr'

*v.* 1. To come to an end.  
Unless I renew it, my fishing license will **expire** next month.  
2. To die.  
The patient **expired** before he could be rushed to the hospital.

**exponent**

ek spō' nənt

*n.* A person who explains, interprets, or works to make something popular.

Alvin Ailey, who founded the American Dance Theatre in 1958, was an **exponent** of a kind of modern dance that often incorporated African elements.

**novice**

nāv' is

*n.* A person new at something; a beginner.

Although I am only a **novice** at downhill skiing, I find the sport exhilarating.

**spry**

sprī

*adj.* Moving with quickness and ease; lively.

The lethargic cat lay curled up in front of the fire while the **spry** kitten leaped from the chair, to the table, to the top of the refrigerator.

**tenuous**

ten' yoo əs

*adj.* 1. Lacking substance, flimsy.

His argument that demolishing the historic building would enhance the appearance of the street is indeed **tenuous**.

2. Not thick; slender.

The **tenuous** length of rope was rejected by the hikers in favor of a stronger piece.

3. Lacking density; thin.

At an altitude of 29,000 feet, the air is **tenuous**, making it necessary for mountain climbers to rely on supplementary oxygen.

**truism**

trū' iz əm

*n.* A truth that is so well known that it is almost unnecessary to say it.

"You only live once" is a **truism**.

## 16A 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.

1. A **tenuous** connection is one that is easily broken.

2. A **truism** is a false statement that appears to be true.

3. To **default** on something is to be falsely blamed for it.

4. To **contravene** a rule is to be governed by it.

5. A **belated** welcome is one that is given too long after a person arrives.

6. To **expend** precious resources is to deplete them.

7. To **expire** is to draw one's last breath.

8. An **eminent** poet is one who has recently died.

9. To **emblazon** a uniform is to add attention-getting details to it.

10. An **exponent** of universal health care is someone who favors it.

11. To be in the **doldrums** is to be in a state of apathetic inactivity.

12. A **spry** person is one who meddles in the affairs of others.

13. A **novice** is someone who is inexperienced.

14. **Chagrin** is fear of the unknown.

15. The **caliber** of a gun measures the inside diameter of the barrel.

belated  
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chagrin  
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eminent  
expend  
expire  
exponent  
novice  
spry  
tenuous  
truism

# 16B 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. default

- (a) I \_\_\_\_\_ her for not making a greater effort in her course work.
- (b) After \_\_\_\_\_ on so many financial obligations, he had to declare bankruptcy.
- (c) When Nuñez walked off the court in a huff, I won the match by \_\_\_\_\_.

## 2. exponent

- (a) The president says he is an \_\_\_\_\_ of free trade.
- (b) The writer of Mother Goose, a collection of verse for children, was an \_\_\_\_\_ of rhymed poetry.
- (c) I defeated my \_\_\_\_\_ in the chess tournament in fifteen moves.

## 3. belated

- (a) I offer you \_\_\_\_\_ congratulations on last month's promotion to chair of the department.
- (b) The \_\_\_\_\_ patrons had to stand since all the seats were taken.
- (c) We were \_\_\_\_\_ to hear that Trixie won "Best Cat in Show."

## 4. doldrums

- (a) The state has big plans to rescue its tourist industry from the \_\_\_\_\_.
- (b) I told him to snap out of the \_\_\_\_\_ and go out and do something he enjoys.
- (c) Few businesses survived the economic \_\_\_\_\_ of the 1930s.

## 5. eminent

- (a) Her \_\_\_\_\_ reputation as a philanthropist made her a beloved figure in the city.
- (b) Dr. Benjamin Spock, who greatly influenced parents' raising of children after World War II, was an \_\_\_\_\_ pediatrician.
- (c) Dr. Linus Pauling, \_\_\_\_\_ chemist and winner of two Nobel Prizes, was also an opponent of nuclear weapons testing.

## 6. contravene

- (a) Does it \_\_\_\_\_ postal regulations to reuse uncanceled stamps?
- (b) I don't mean to \_\_\_\_\_ you, but I believe you are mistaken.
- (c) We were able to \_\_\_\_\_ the message before it reached its destination.

## 7. emblazon

- (a) "I never want to speak to you again!" she \_\_\_\_\_.
- (b) The French athletes' shirts were \_\_\_\_\_ with three large red, white, and blue stripes.
- (c) We \_\_\_\_\_ the words "Go for It" across the twelve-foot banner we hung in the gym.

8. **spry**

- (a) The young dancer's \_\_\_\_\_ movements endeared her to the audience.  
 (b) I noticed the \_\_\_\_\_ glances they exchanged, and that made me suspicious.  
 (c) The \_\_\_\_\_ heat of the Florida sun wilted the crops.

## 16C Word Study

Fill in the missing word in each of the sentences below. Then write a brief definition of the word. The number in parenthesis shows the lesson in which the word appears.

1. The prefix *contra-* (against) and the Latin verb *venire* (to come) combine to form the word \_\_\_\_\_ (16).

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

2. The prefix *ante-* (before) combines with the Latin *cedere* (to go) form the word \_\_\_\_\_ (15).

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

3. The Latin *novus* (new) forms the word \_\_\_\_\_ (16).

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

4. The prefix *bene-* (good) combines with the Latin verb *facere* (to make) to form the word \_\_\_\_\_ (10).

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

5. The Latin verb *credere* (to believe) forms the word \_\_\_\_\_ (12).

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

6. The prefix *magnus* (great) combines with the Latin *animus* (mind; spirit) to form the word \_\_\_\_\_ (10).

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

7. The Latin verb *tangere* (to touch) forms the word \_\_\_\_\_ (11).

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

8. The Latin *mater* forms the word \_\_\_\_\_ (14).

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

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 caliber  
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 default  
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 emblazon  
 eminent  
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 expire  
 exponent  
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 tenuous  
 truism

9. The prefix *com-* (with) and the Latin *miser* (wretched) combine to form the word \_\_\_\_\_ (10).

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

10. The Latin *greg* or *grex* (a flock) forms the word \_\_\_\_\_ (14).

Definition: \_\_\_\_\_

## 16D 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. **default**

- (a) The accident couldn't have been prevented, so no one was blamed for it.
- (b) I just can't seem to do anything right around here.
- (c) A tiny flaw in one of the seams caused the metal casing to crack.

### 2. **expend**

- (a) Riding a bicycle uphill is much harder than going downhill.
- (b) A white dwarf is a star that has no more hydrogen or helium to burn.
- (c) When I take a deep breath, my chest measures forty inches.

### 3. **novice**

- (a) The first time I tried snowboarding, I felt very nervous.
- (b) Seeing the first crocus after a long winter always cheers me up.
- (c) The first car off the assembly line was a red two-door sports coupe.

### 4. **chagrin**

- (a) The invitation said formal dress, but Chang arrived in a T-shirt and shorts.
- (b) After boasting that she had an "eagle eye," Joanna missed the target every time.
- (c) There was an awkward silence in the audience as the comedian walked off the stage.

### 5. **doldrums**

- (a) Those bright specks settling on the bottom of the stream are flecks of gold.
- (b) Business was slack early in the year, and it failed to pick up later.
- (c) Some critics assert that no important poets have emerged in the past twenty years.

### 6. **caliber**

- (a) How does a .38 Luger differ from a Colt .45 revolver?
- (b) The college accepts only the top five percent of those who apply.
- (c) The measuring instruments are reset each morning to make sure they all agree.

7. **tenuous**

- (a) As long as there was one chance in a million, they would continue to hope for his recovery.
- (b) The new material is said to be ten times stronger than steel.
- (c) His self-confidence, never strong to begin with, has been shattered by his latest test scores.

8. **expire**

- (a) You cannot use this passport after midnight on December 31 of this year.
- (b) Gloria's eyes closed, as though in sleep, for the last time.
- (c) The car stalled so she started the engine again.

9. **spry**

- (a) I suffered minor bruises when I slipped on a sheet of ice.
- (b) The bird was released to the wild after being nursed back to health.
- (c) You can never be sure when she's joking and when she's being serious.

10. **truism**

- (a) I believe her when she says that she was home by ten.
- (b) "What goes up must come down."
- (c) John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died on July 4, 1826.

## 16E Passage

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

## The Marathon

According to legend, the race called the marathon commemorates the feat of a Greek soldier who in 490 B.C. ran a distance of 22 miles and 1,470 yards from Marathon to Athens to announce his countrymen's victory over the Persians. Legend also has it that the runner **expired** from exhaustion after achieving his goal. Evidence supporting this story is **tenuous**, however, since the first reference to it appeared six hundred years after the event!

Today, in road races throughout the world, the marathon is a popular sporting event. Runners of varying speeds and ability levels enter to test their endurance, break a record, or simply say they had the experience of completing a marathon. A customary part of the modern Olympic games since 1896, the marathon has had a distance of 26 miles and 386 yards since the 1908 Olympics. In that year the race was held in London, where it began at the gates of Windsor Castle and ended at the Olympic stadium's royal box, where the king and queen sat.

The 1908 Olympic marathon was memorable for another reason. An American won the gold medal by **default**. The first runner to cross the finish line, an Italian, was **chagrined** to discover that he had been disqualified because British officials had helped him over the last few yards, **contravening** the rule that the runner must complete the full course unaided. After that, an American didn't win again for sixty-four years.

At the 1972 Olympics, Frank Shorter's victory brought the United States's losing streak out of the **doldrums** and significantly increased the popularity of the marathon in the United States. Women's official entry into the sport was **belated**; it was 1972 when they were allowed to enter the Boston Marathon, and 1984 when they were allowed to compete in the Olympic event,

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where they set impressive records of speed. **Eminent** international runners include Grete Waitz of Norway, the predominant female distance runner of the 1970s and 1980s and nine-time winner of the New York City Marathon, and three-time consecutive Boston Marathon winner Uta Pippig of Germany.

People of all ages and levels of ability participate in marathons. Those of the highest **caliber** can achieve finishing times of around two and a quarter hours, whereas the goal of a **novice** is often simply to finish. Athletes who are physically challenged are particular **exponents** of the wheelchair competition. Older runners also participate. In the 1991 Boston Marathon, Johnny Kelley, a **spry** 84-year-old, finished in 5 hours, 40 minutes, and 54 seconds. His official number, sixty, **emblazoned** on his shirt, honored the fact that Kelley was competing for the sixtieth time. In 2004, Kelley—then retired—was honored as the race's Grand Marshall.

A marathon tests not only powers of physical endurance but also courage and determination. After about twenty miles, long distance runners have **expended** fluids needed by their bodies to supply the muscles with energy. Runners call this "hitting the wall" because at this point it is will power more than physical resources that keeps one going to the end of the race. It is a **truism** among runners that anyone can run for twenty miles, but it takes incredible strength to "break the pain barrier."

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. How can spectators identify runners in a marathon?

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2. How do runners express an obvious truth about those who finish marathons?

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3. What was unusual about the American winner of the 1908 Olympic marathon?

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4. Why couldn't a woman enter the Boston Marathon in 1970?

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5. How did Frank Shorter's victory in the 1972 Olympics affect the popularity of the marathon in the United States?

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6. What **eminent** people viewed the 1908 Olympic games?

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7. What word would you use to describe older marathon runners?

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8. Why wouldn't a **novice** runner in a marathon be considered high-**caliber**?

9. What positive claims might a running enthusiast make about distance running?

10. What caused the Greek runner in 490 B.C.E. to **expire**?

### FUN & FASCINATING FACTS

**Doldrums** is a plural noun for which there is no singular. It can take either the singular or plural form of the verb. Originally, a *doldrum* was a dull, apathetic person; the word later lost this meaning and acquired its plural form to describe a depressed or lethargic state of mind. Similarly, light, calm winds occurring north of the equator between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans are called *doldrums*. A person in the *doldrums* probably doesn't have much motivation, just as a ship sailing on the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean doesn't receive much wind from the *doldrums*.

Don't confuse **eminent** with *imminent*, which means "about to happen." (An important discovery may be *imminent* from such an *eminent* scientist.)

The Latin *novus* means "new" and forms the root of a number of English words besides **novice**. A *novel* approach to a problem is one that is new; an *innovation* is a new device or new way of doing something; and to *renovate* something is to make it like new again.