

Lesson 17

Word List

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

blight

blīt

- n.* 1. Any disease that damages plants.
The potato **blight** of the 1840s deprived the Irish people of their main sustenance.
2. Something that harms or destroys.
Dilapidated housing contributes to urban **blight**.
v. To do harm to.
A vote of censure by the United States Senate can **blight** a politician's career.

cite

sīt

- v.* 1. To mention or quote as an example or authority.
My mother always **cites** *Pride and Prejudice* as a book you can read and enjoy over and over again.
2. To mention for praise.
At an assembly, the principal **cited** Ms. Garcia for her excellent teaching.
3. To summon before a court of law.
Since he was **cited** for speeding last year, my uncle has been a much more prudent driver.

clemency

klem' ən sē

- n.* Mercy shown in punishing or judging someone.
When the governor granted his appeal for **clemency**, the ailing prisoner was released from jail.

eccentric

ek sen' trik

- adj.* Departing from accepted or normal behavior; odd.
My father was convinced that my brother's tattoos were just another example of his **eccentric** behavior.
n. One who behaves in an odd or peculiar way.
Hetty Green was an **eccentric**; although quite rich, she lived as if she were destitute.

farce

fārs

- n.* 1. A humorous stage play marked by improbable situations and exaggerated behavior.
Charlie Chaplin was the star of *Modern Times*, a hilarious **farce** about technology.
2. An absurd or ridiculous event or situation; a mockery.
The selectmen's meeting turned into a **farce** when every person on the building committee refused to testify and resigned in protest.

foray

fōr' ā

- n.* A sudden raid or advance into enemy territory.
The guerrillas left the hills for occasional **forays** into the town to get food.

glean

glēn

- v.* To gather bit by bit.
President Nelson Mandela's farewell speech to the South African parliament was four and one-half hours long, but I could **glean** its major points from the newspaper the next day.

nominal

nām' ə nəl

- adj.* 1. In name only, not in fact.
The king or queen is the **nominal** head of state in England, but in reality it is the Prime Minister and the Houses of Parliament who rule.
2. Very small.
The museum charged only a **nominal** entrance fee of fifty cents in order to attract more visitors.

ostracize

ās' trə sīz

- v.* To exclude from a group; to banish.
When the newspaper columnist began writing about the Bavarian town's Nazi past, many of its citizens **ostracized** her.

posthumous
päs' tyөө mäs

adj. Occurring after a person has died.
Former slave Johnson Whittaker, expelled from West Point in 1880, was given a **posthumous** commission in the Army 115 years later.

quash
kwäsh

v. 1. To put down by force.
British troops tried to **quash** the rebellion of the colonists, but they failed.
2. To put a stop to legally.
Miners rejoiced when the injunction banning their strike was **quashed** by an appeals court judge.

recipient
rē sip' ē ənt

n. One who receives.
Dustin Hoffman has twice been the **recipient** of an Academy Award.

ribald
rib' əld

adj. Funny in a crude way.
Boccaccio was a fourteenth-century Italian writer whose masterpiece, *Decameron*, contained ten **ribald** stories.

suffrage
suf' rij

n. The right to vote.
The twenty-sixth amendment to the Constitution extended **suffrage** to eighteen-year-olds.

verve
vɛrv

n. Enthusiasm; vivacity.
English author Fay Weldon has been writing comic novels with undiminished **verve** for over twenty-five years.

17A 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. If you **ostracize** someone, you don't have anything to do with that person.

2. A **farce** is a type of play that provokes laughter by its absurdities.

3. A **posthumous** novel is one published after the author's death.

4. **Blight** is a plant disease.

5. **Clemency** is the ability to foretell events.

6. To **quash** an order is to declare that it is no longer in effect.

7. **Verve** is a vague feeling of uneasiness.

8. **Suffrage** is pain or injury caused by another's actions.

9. An **eccentric** is a person who behaves oddly.

10. A **nominal** charge is one that is exorbitant.

11. To make a **foray** into a place is to go in and out quickly.

12. A **ribald** comment is one that is brief and to the point.

13. The **recipient** of something is the immediate cause of it.

14. To **glean** facts is to make them up out of one's head.

15. To be **cited** for good driving is to be commended for it.

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17B 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. glean

- (a) I was not able to _____ much information about their intentions from their letter.
- (b) She expects to _____ enough money from the sale of her house to pay her son's college tuition.
- (c) I _____ this antique clock at a flea market in London.

2. blight

- (a) Botanists are doing research on the plant virus that causes soybean _____.
- (b) Reports of shark attacks can _____ the tourist industry in a beach resort.
- (c) I hope my having to leave early did not _____ you.

3. cite

- (a) He _____ Article One of the Constitution to prove his point.
- (b) Ms. Rosenberg, the principal, _____ my little brother for noticeable improvement in reading.
- (c) We plan to visit the _____ of the ancient city of Troy when we go to Turkey.

4. ribald

- (a) The young comedian struggled to ignore the audience's _____ remarks.
- (b) The pony, a black and white _____, is very popular with the children on the farm.
- (c) The words of the French writer Rabelais (1490–1553) are noted for their _____ humor.

5. ostracize

- (a) Dr. Haynes _____ the growth on my arm with a special laser.
- (b) We _____ the children into three groups for the camping trip.
- (c) His racist views were sufficient reason for us to _____ him.

6. eccentric

- (a) I would hardly call it _____ for a man to part his hair on the side.
- (b) The picture above the piano was slightly _____, so I got up and straightened it.
- (c) The writer Gertrude Stein's cigar smoking was considered _____ in Paris in the 1920s.

7. nominal

- (a) The _____ title of the advocacy group is Students for a Shorter School Day.
- (b) In my opinion, ten dollars is not a _____ admission charge!
- (c) In our math class, we learned the way in which Roman _____ correspond to Arabic numbers.

8. farce

- (a) The hero in a _____ is often a clumsy character.
- (b) The antics of the Marx Brothers, a comedy trio, made their movie *A Night at the Opera* a hilarious _____.
- (c) The artist took less than fifteen minutes to paint this _____.

17C Word Study

Write the word that makes the most sense in each sentence. Use each word only once. If neither word fits, leave the space blank.

pugnacious / aggressive

1. A(n) _____ manner shows a willingness or eagerness to fight.
2. A good salesperson can be _____ without offending the customer.
3. He pointed a(n) _____ finger at me as he spoke.

clemency / mercy

4. Aunt Lucy showed her _____ in many loving ways.
5. The judge agreed to consider the prisoner's plea for _____.
6. Warrior Genghis Khan showed no _____ to those who opposed him in battle.

novice / beginner

7. A child just learning to read is a _____.
8. After fifty years on the job, it was time for the _____ to retire.
9. After his first year teaching, he was no longer a _____ and was prepared for any challenge.

garb / clothing

10. A bird's _____ is its wings.
11. The store sells _____ for children and adults.
12. The _____ of Stone Age people consisted of animal skins.

disingenuous / insincere

13. The sarcasm of his tone made the words sound _____.
14. While not technically a lie, the statement could certainly be considered _____.
15. Did you notice the _____ way she signs her name?

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eccentric

farce

foray

glean

nominal

ostracize

posthumous

quash

recipient

ribald

suffrage

verve

17D 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. **foray**

- (a) The crowd was so excited that they knocked down the fence.
- (b) We met no resistance when our small band rode behind enemy lines.
- (c) Julio took several courses in harmony so he could write music for different instruments.

2. **cite**

- (a) Kaela figured out how to solve the math problem.
- (b) The author gives many examples of cats returning after a long absence.
- (c) The judge carefully explained the charge to the jury.

3. **suffrage**

- (a) The pain from Ranji's broken ankle made it difficult for her to sleep.
- (b) The Nineteenth Amendment, passed in 1920, gave women the right to vote.
- (c) Walking a dog is good exercise for the owner as well as the animal.

4. **verve**

- (a) How dare you take the car without asking permission!
- (b) Someone had left the cap off, and the orange soda had gone flat.
- (c) Winona throws herself wholeheartedly into everything she does.

5. **farce**

- (a) The Morellos were miles from anywhere when their car engine suddenly stopped.
- (b) Patrick declined a third helping of pasta, saying he couldn't eat another thing.
- (c) As Angelo opened the door, the dog ran in, the cat ran out, the newspaper blew away, and the parrot croaked, "Good morning!"

6. **posthumous**

- (a) I saw in the paper that Mr. Poslethwaite died last week.
- (b) The firefighter's widow accepted the medal on her husband's behalf.
- (c) Fame did not come to Kierkegaard, the Danish philosopher, until long after his death.

7. **clemency**

- (a) The jury rejected the death penalty and recommended life imprisonment.
- (b) Calamine lotion always eases the discomfort of my poison ivy.
- (c) Every winter I look forward to eating those delicious little tangerines from Spain.

8. **nominal**

- (a) The numbers 4, 9, 16, and 25 are squares of 2, 3, 4, and 5.
- (b) Perry was supposed to be in charge, but Carin actually ran the gym.
- (c) Sobha's first run around the track was just a warm-up.

9. **recipient**

- (a) Since the letter was addressed to Joanne, I gave it to her right away.
- (b) During Ramadan we always go to the mosque.
- (c) The kindergarten children were thrilled to get six new tricycles for their class.

10. **ostracize**

- (a) Mark suddenly fell silent when Scott's name was mentioned.
- (b) None of the union members would speak to the people who went to work during the miners' strike.
- (c) My new camp T-shirts shrank at least two sizes in the wash.

17E Passage

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

Honor Restored

The United States awards the Congressional Medal of Honor to members of the armed forces for acts of conspicuous bravery in time of war. First issued in 1862, its **recipients** as of 2004 numbered 3,459 men—and one woman.

This woman was Mary Walker, one of the first women doctors in the United States. Born in 1832, Mary Walker gave distinguished service to her country as a Union Army surgeon during the Civil War. Many people believe she also served as a spy for the Union Army, for she made frequent **forays** behind enemy lines. Her work was so useful that information she **gleaned** from these ventures saved a Northern army from “a serious reverse,” according to one official report. While on one of these missions she was captured by Confederate forces and spent four months in a Richmond, Virginia, jail, until she was freed as part of a prisoner exchange. In January 1866, President Andrew Johnson awarded Dr. Walker the Medal of Honor, which **cited** her valor on the battlefield in caring for the sick and wounded.

All her life, Dr. Walker was a tireless reformer. She supported female **suffrage** at a time when few women themselves favored the idea and those who did were regarded by many people as **eccentric**. She was aware of the harmful effects of tobacco and opposed the habit of smoking. She was opposed to the death penalty, regarding it as barbaric. She also felt that women should not have to wear crinolines, the then fashionable, but uncomfortable, full, stiff skirts supported by “baskets” underneath and puffed out at the back just below the waist by means of pads or a frame. In fact, finding men's clothing both practical and comfortable, Dr. Walker wore it, thus becoming a living advertisement for dress reform. Because of this behavior, she was **ostracized** in “polite society” and sometimes subjected to **ribald** remarks by passers-by. Because she wore men's clothing she was charged with impersonating a man, a punishable offense at the time. She defended herself in court by claiming the right “to dress as I please in free America on whose tented fields I have served for four years in the cause of human freedom.” She reminded the court that no one had objected to her wearing the gold-striped trousers of a Union Army officer during the war. After hearing the case, the judge **quashed** the charges and ordered the police to leave her alone. Dr. Walker left the courtroom to the accompaniment of loud applause from the spectators who,

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while they may have questioned her attire, had nothing but admiration for the **verve** with which she defended her right to dress as she pleased. But public opinion was not always so supportive. Her opposition to capital punishment outraged much of the citizenry when, in 1901, consistent with her beliefs, she circulated an appeal for **clemency** for the murderer of President William McKinley.

In 1917, a military review board examined the cases of everyone who had received the Medal of Honor to ensure that all those who had received the award met the required standards. In the case of Dr. Walker, the board found two deficiencies: first, she was only **nominally** attached to the 52nd Ohio Infantry and not actually a member of the armed forces; and second, although she had performed distinguished service over a period of time, she had not been recognized for a particular act of individual heroism. These facts led the board to ask Dr. Walker to return her medal. Outraged that this repudiation would **blight** her reputation, Dr. Walker's response was, "Over my dead body."

An element of **farce** entered the situation when it was discovered that, through a clerical error, Medals of Honor had been given to all 864 members of the same regiment; in all, 911 medals were recalled. But Dr. Walker found none of this amusing, and although she was breaking the law by doing so, she continued to wear the medal. She died in 1919 as a result of a fall on the Capitol steps, where she had gone in a vain attempt to gain acknowledgment that the medal was rightfully hers.

In the 1970s, Anne Walker, a niece of Dr. Walker, waged a campaign to gain official recognition of her aunt's right to the medal. On June 10, 1977, the Secretary of the Army granted the Congressional Medal of Honor **posthumously** to Dr. Mary Walker, making her once more the only female winner of the nation's highest award for heroism.

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. What unique distinction does Dr. Mary Walker hold?

2. How was Mary Walker useful to the Union cause?

3. How was the **blight** cast on Dr. Walker's war record finally corrected?

4. Why was Walker summoned before a court of law?

5. What two arguments did Walker make that led the judge to **quash** the charges against her?

6. Why might people consider Walker an early feminist?

7. Why was Walker **ostracized**?
8. How do you think Walker would have responded to **ribald** remarks?
9. What does it mean that Walker was only **nominally** attached to the 52nd Ohio Infantry?
10. Give an example of an unpopular position Walker took that was consistent with her beliefs.
11. How did Walker's **verve** manifest itself throughout her life?
12. What word would you use to describe the situation in which all 864 members of the same regiment received Medals of Honor? How did this happen?
13. Do you think Walker would be considered **eccentric** today? Why or why not?

FUN & FASCINATING FACTS

The Latin *nomen* means “name” and forms the root of a number of English words. A *misnomer* is a name that is improperly applied: for example, calling a whale a fish; to *nominate* someone is to name that person as a candidate for an office; and a **nominal** ruler is one who rules in name only, as did King Victor Emmanuel of Italy in the 1930s, when Mussolini wielded the real power.

In ancient Greece, a citizen of Athens who was deemed dangerous to the state could be banished—

sent into exile with no charges brought against him. This happened only to men, since women in ancient Greece were not considered citizens. Citizens voted to banish someone by writing the person's name on a piece of broken pottery or earthenware called an *ostrakon*. If enough votes were cast against the person, he would be **ostracized**, that is, cut off from contact with his fellow citizens. The word has passed unchanged in form and meaning to the present day.