

Lesson 5

Word List

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

callow
kal' ō

adj. Young and inexperienced; immature.
The student was too **callow** to know he was being fooled.

contemporary
kən tem' pər er' ē

n. A person living during the same period as another.
Martha Jane Canary, known as "Calamity Jane," and Annie Oakley were **contemporaries**.
adj. Existing or occurring at the same time.
The rise in fuel costs was **contemporary** with the demand for alternative fuels.

cynical
sin' i kəl

adj. Doubtful of the sincerity of others' motives; skeptical.
People become **cynical** about diet programs when lost weight is soon regained.
cynic *n.*
Even though many clients have lied to her, Katharine, a public defender, has not become a **cynic**.

despot
des' pət

n. A ruler with absolute power or tyrannical control over a group of people.
In the late 1970s and early 1980s, thousands fled Haiti seeking refuge from the **despot** Jean Claude Duvalier.
despotic *adj.*
The Declaration of Independence of the United States asserts the government's right to overthrow a **despotic** ruler.

enunciate
ē nun' sē āt'

v. 1. To pronounce clearly.
In speech class we learn to **enunciate** our words.
2. To state; to announce.
The president **enunciated** his objectives for the coming year in his State of the Union address to Congress.

impediment
im ped' ə mēt

n. Anything that gets in the way; an obstacle.
After the hurricane, fallen trees were **impediments** to traffic in our neighborhood.

impoverish
im pāv' ə r ish

v. 1. To make poor.
Uncontrolled gambling can **impoverish** a person.
2. To take away.
Continual overfarming **impoverishes** the soil.
impoverished *adj.*
The Peace Corps is an agency of the United States government that sends volunteers to improve living standards in **impoverished** areas of the world.

indolent
in' də lənt

adj. Indulging in ease; avoiding exertion; lazy.
Being in the torrid heat of the tropical sun makes one feel **indolent**.
indolence *n.*
His failure to reach his goal certainly cannot be attributed to **indolence**.

sagacious
sə gā' shəs

adj. Showing sound judgment; wise.
My grandmother's **sagacious** advice has guided me many times over the years.
sagacity *n.*
I was amazed when she questioned the **sagacity** of my plan to climb the mountain.

secular
sek' yə lər

adj. Worldly; not connected with a church or religion.
The choir included a few **secular** songs in the memorial service.

speculate
spek' yoo lāt'

v. 1. To think about or make guesses.
As we waited, we **speculated** about whether he'd keep his promise and show up.
2. To engage in a risky business venture.
She lost a great deal of money when she **speculated** in the stock market last year.

strife
strif

n. Conflict or struggle.
The **strife** between the two families has existed for a few years now.

venerate
ven' ər āt

v. To show great respect for.
Asian cultures **venerate** their ancestors long after they have died.

voracious
vō rā' shəs

adj. 1. Ravenous; desiring and eating a large amount of food.
We arrived back from our hike with **voracious** appetites.
2. Greatly eager.
Simon has been a **voracious** reader since childhood.

wane
wān

v. To get smaller, dimmer, or weaker; to near an end.
When interest in sitcoms **waned**, the television networks switched to reality shows.

5A 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 **voracious** creature is very hungry.

2. A **sagacious** person is difficult to rouse to action.

3. A **secular** group is one concerned primarily with spiritual or religious matters.

4. **Strife** between people is a condition of tranquility.

5. To **speculate** is to make a precarious monetary transaction.

6. A **callow** person is someone who is easily frightened.

7. To **venerate** someone is to hold that person in high regard.

8. A **despot** is a person who avoids the company of others.

9. **Indolence** is a state of indecision.

10. To **enunciate** a principle is to express it clearly.

11. **Contemporaries** are people living in the same area of the world.

12. To **wane** is to go from place to place in aimless fashion.

13. An **impediment** is a barrier or obstruction.

14. A **cynic** is a person who is easily deceived.

15. To be **impoverished** is to lack sufficient money for one's needs.

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5B 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. enunciate

- (a) She has yet to _____ the concerns that are motivating her to run for a seat on the school board.
- (b) The letters were so faded that I could not _____ the message.
- (c) The child _____ her words as she read the poem to the assembly.

2. sagacity

- (a) Pericles, known for his _____, made ancient Athens an early center of democracy, art, and literature in the fifth century B.C.E.
- (b) The _____ of the tennis net can be corrected simply by tightening it.
- (c) You'll be able to squeeze into this jacket because of the _____ of the fabric.

3. wane

- (a) Her strength did not start to _____ until she was well into her eighties.
- (b) After the moon is full, it begins to _____.
- (c) His face was so _____ that I felt something must be the matter with him.

4. callow

- (a) As an intern, I produced _____ work that always had to be checked by my supervisor.
- (b) Those peaches are still too _____ to be eaten.
- (c) When I was a _____ schoolboy, I didn't have the courage to speak my mind.

5. impoverish

- (a) The farmers were _____ by a series of poor harvests.
- (b) Cars and trucks abandoned by the side of the road _____ the highway.
- (c) Determined that her children not be culturally _____, she took them frequently to the library.

6. speculate

- (a) I'm not prepared to _____ about what happened to them after they left here.
- (b) Can you prove that they _____ with the money entrusted to their safekeeping?
- (c) I _____ wrongly when I said that Canadian and United States dollars are equal in value.

7. strife

- (a) Our math teacher said that we must _____ to do better on our next quiz.
- (b) "Jealousy and greed cause much _____ in the world," she sighed.
- (c) _____ between labor and management in the factory resulted in many work stoppages.

8. contemporary

- (a) Advances in biomedical research are _____ with a growing interest in alternative medicine.
- (b) Sally Ride and Judith Resnik, the first and second women astronauts, were _____.
- (c) This is just a _____ arrangement until we come up with something better.

5C 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 *con-* means "with." It combines with the Latin *tempus* (time) to form the English word _____ (5).

Definition: _____

2. The prefix *ex-* means "from" or "out." It combines with the Latin *tollere* (to lift) to form the English word _____ (1).

Definition: _____

3. The prefix *inter-* means "between." It combines with the Latin *mittere* (to send) to form the English word _____ (1).

Definition: _____

4. The prefix *in-* means "not." It combines with the Latin *superare* (to overcome) to form the English word _____ (1).

Definition: _____

5. The same prefix combines with the Latin *dolare* (to feel pain) to form the English word _____ (5).

Definition: _____

6. The Latin *vagus* means "wandering." It forms the English word _____ (1).

Definition: _____

7. The prefix *de-* means "from." It combines with the Latin *trahere* (to draw; to pull) to form the English word _____ (1).

Definition: _____

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8. The Latin *vorare* means "to devour." It forms the English word _____ (5).

Definition: _____

9. The Latin *torrere* means "to parch." It forms the English word _____ (2).

Definition: _____

10. The Latin *visus* means "appearance." It forms the English word _____ (1).

Definition: _____

5D 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. **indolence**

- (a) We didn't have to lift a finger the whole time we were there.
- (b) Mr. Badger opened one eye. "Go away," he said and resumed his nap.
- (c) "Why did you slam that door as you left?" she asked critically.

2. **voracious**

- (a) "I don't think you are being truthful," asserted Isaiah.
- (b) "Take away their plates," Alice cried, "before they eat them, too!"
- (c) Simone spends all her babysitting money on science fiction.

3. **contemporary**

- (a) Listening to my friend Jody has taught me a great deal.
- (b) It will be another two years before the bridge is completed.
- (c) He was available to work for only a few months, so he did substitute teaching.

4. **venerate**

- (a) Many Indian people hold Mahatma Gandhi in high regard.
- (b) The monks bowed low before the massive statue of the reclining Buddha in Bangkok.
- (c) This ring has been in my family for four generations.

5. **cynic**

- (a) Don't pay full price for computer parts; I can get them wholesale.
- (b) "You're so egotistical," she said. "You think you're so great!"
- (c) Some people think that politicians care about just one thing: getting reelected.

6. speculate

- (a) Joannie told me she spends twenty dollars a week on lottery tickets.
- (b) In fifty years, gasoline-powered cars will be a thing of the past.
- (c) I expect gold to double in price within two years, so I'm buying it now.

7. despot

- (a) The rule in our house is "If you don't eat your vegetables, you can't have any dessert."
- (b) "Off with his head!" was a frequent order issued by the Queen of Hearts in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.
- (c) In the novel, the prince ordered every male in the kingdom to shave off his beard.

8. secular

- (a) Dellison is an old private school that has never been affiliated with any religious group.
- (b) Those serving on the commission were paid a dollar a year.
- (c) She hoped to be reunited with her sister.

9. impediment

- (a) The mayor laid the foundation stone of the new hospital.
- (b) The crafts fair was held indoors this year because of the bad weather.
- (c) Not speaking the language put me at a disadvantage.

10. enunciate

- (a) Elocution lessons are intended to sharpen one's vocal delivery.
- (b) In the musical *My Fair Lady*, Eliza Doolittle learns to speak English with graceful clarity and impeccable grammar.
- (c) "He did it!" she cried, pointing at the trembling figure before her.

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5E Passage

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

Ideas That Endure

The greatest educators are those whose lessons are still remembered centuries after their deaths. Among this select group, few stand higher than the Chinese sage Confucius. He was the first to **enunciate** the Golden Rule—treat others as you would have them treat you.

Confucius was born into a noble but **impoverished** family in 551 B.C.E. in what is now the province of Shantung. His father died when he was three; as a young man he worked as a herder and storekeeper in order to support himself and his widowed mother. Unable to pay for a formal education, he became a **voracious** reader whose wide and deep learning soon earned him a formidable reputation as a scholar.

Hired as a tutor to the sons of the wealthy, he decided to open his own school. A willingness to learn was the only requirement; lack of money was no **impediment** since Confucius required the wealthier parents to pay for the education of the poorer students. Many of his students went on to hold important government offices, thereby adding to his reputation as a man of learning and moral character. For almost all who know Confucius extolled his virtues.

An exception to these admirers was Lao-tzu, a man whose writings are second only to those of Confucius in their impact on China. When the two men met, Confucius was in his early thirties, and Lao-tzu was more than fifty years his senior. Confucius was deeply impressed by the older man's wisdom, but Lao-tzu, **venerated** as the founder of the religion of Taoism, thought the younger man **callow**. This judgment is not surprising, for Lao-tzu's concerns were spiritual, while Confucius's thoughts were focused largely on **secular** matters. For example, Confucius declined to discuss whether the soul survives the death of the body. His position was that since one cannot understand the meaning of life, there is no point in **speculating** about the mystery of death.

Confucius's concern had always been with such practical questions as how to achieve good government and how best to conduct relations within the family and between individuals. His answer to both questions was *li*, translated as "good manners," which meant that those in authority, whether in government or in the family, must show respect to those beneath them. The ideas of Confucius were particularly appropriate for his time because during that period China lacked a strong central government. **Despotic** warlords ruled China, and their constant **strife** and widespread vice brought disorder and misery to the common people. In the words of a **contemporary** of Confucius, "The world had fallen into decay, and right principles had disappeared." As a result of his ties with former pupils, Confucius was made a minister of justice in his native province of Lu and, not surprisingly, showed himself to be a **sagacious** administrator. As a high official, Confucius was able to practice *li* and encourage others to do the same. In this way, he helped restore order in the land, all but eliminated crime, and gave the people of Lu a period of peace.

This happy state was short-lived. The ruler of Lu province grew **indolent** and began taking advice from those who wanted to return to the old days when there had been more opportunity for personal enrichment by corrupting government officials. Confucius found his influence **waning**, and after four years in office he was dismissed as a result of the maneuvers of jealous rivals. Now fifty-six, Confucius spent the next thirteen years traveling throughout China, hoping to find a ruler who would accept his guidance. Although he failed in this endeavor, there is no evidence that he ever became **cynical**. Although Confucius did not put his principles into writing, a group of his followers passed on his teachings. These dealt with codes of conduct based on the belief that strong moral character is the basis of civilization and that inner goodness is reflected in outer behavior. Some three thousand principles of Confucius survived and became the basis of Chinese education for over two thousand years.

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 was Confucius not able to afford a formal education?

2. What details in the passage suggest that Confucius was not an **indolent** youth?

3. How did Confucius educate himself?

4. How might following the Golden Rule reduce **strife**?

5. What would be an appropriate description for the person who says that the Golden Rule is "The one with the gold makes the rules"?

6. What evidence do we have that the followers of Confucius **venerated** him?

7. What **impediments** did Confucius have to overcome as a young man?

8. What were some of the differences in point of view between Confucius and Lao-tzu?

9. How do you know that Confucius and Lao-tzu were **contemporaries**?

10. What contributed to Lao-tzu's impression that Confucius was **callow**?

11. What quality do Confucius and Lao-tzu share?

12. Why was it unlikely that **despotic** rulers would appoint Confucius to a position of authority?

13. Why do you think interest in Confucius' teachings has not **waned**?

FUN & FASCINATING FACTS

The adjectives **contemporary** and *contemporaneous* mean the same thing. To say that something is *contemporary* (without specifying with what) is understood to mean “contemporary with us,” or modern. Thus, *contemporary* fashions may be contrasted with those of the 1920s.

The Latin *dolere* means “to feel pain” and forms the root of several English words associated with suffering. In English, *dolor* means “sorrow” or “grief.” (Many of the works of the American poet Emily Dickenson

are filled with a spirit of *dolor*.) *Doleful* means “full of pain or sorrow.” (Her *doleful* expression told me her dog was still missing.)

One of the functions of the prefix *in-* or *im-* is to turn a word into its opposite. **Indolent** once meant “free of pain.” The fact that *indolent* now means “lazy” or “idle” seems to suggest that activity is painful; however, since most societies believe activity to be a good thing, the word *indolent* is now considered derogatory.

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