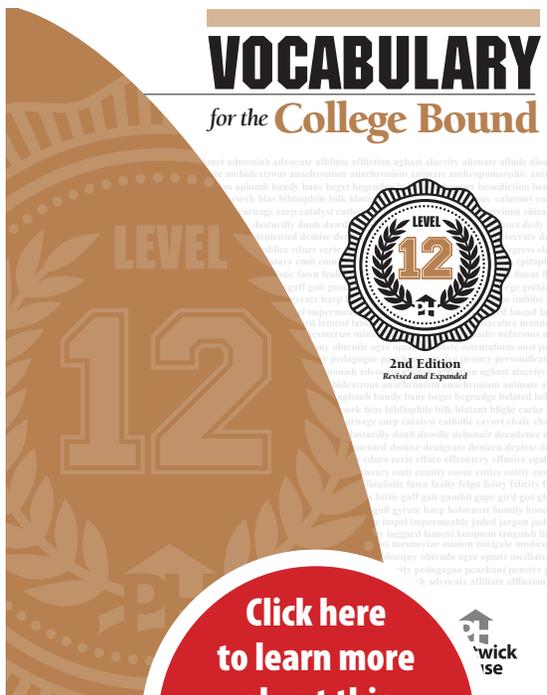




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Revised and Expanded



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for the **College Bound**

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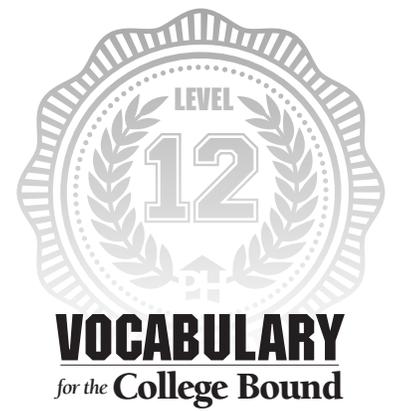


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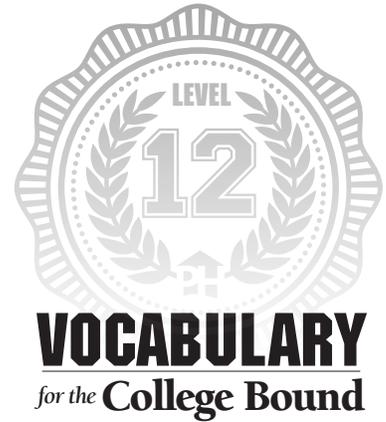
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Strategies for Completing Activities

Words in Context

One way you can make sure that you understand what an unfamiliar word means is to see it used in a sentence and make a guess, an inference, as to its meaning. For example, you probably do not know what the word *theriomorphic* means. Using roots, prefixes, and suffixes will help, as you will see explained below. Read it in the following sentence, though, and you will have another method to arrive at its meaning:

The drawing on the clay tablet that archaeologists recently discovered depicted a man with antlers and hooves—a *theriomorphic* being—within a ring of fire.

Clues in the sentence enable you to see the context of *theriomorphic*: a primitive drawing showing something not completely human. Therefore, you can infer that *theriomorphic* means “a person who looks like an animal.”

Here’s another example:

Dawn was a *somnambulist*; on some nights, her family found her in the hall, other times she was discovered in the basement, and once, they found her sitting asleep in the front seat of the car.

After reading the sentence, you should be able to infer that the word *somnambulist* must mean “someone who walks in his or her sleep.”

Roots, Prefixes, and Suffixes

To the person interested in words, a knowledge of roots, prefixes, and suffixes turns each new, unfamiliar word into a puzzle. And while it is a sure and lifelong way to build your vocabulary, there are two points to keep in mind.

1. Some words have evolved through usage so that today’s definitions are different from the ones you might have inferred from an examination of their roots and/or prefixes. For example, the word *abstruse* contains the prefix *ab-* (away) and the root *trudere* (to thrust) and literally means “to thrust away.” But today, the word is used to describe something that is “hard to understand.”

2. Occasionally, you may be incorrect about a root. For example, knowing that the root *vin* means “to conquer,” you would be correct in concluding that the word *invincible* means “not able to be conquered”; but if you tried to apply that root meaning to the word *vindictive* or *vindicate*, you would miss the actual meaning. So, in analyzing an unfamiliar word, check for other possible roots than the one you first assumed if your inferred meaning doesn’t fit the context.

These warnings notwithstanding, a knowledge of roots, prefixes, and suffixes is one of the best ways to build a strong, vital vocabulary.

Usage Inferences

The next method of determining if you understand what a word means is for you to see the word as it might be applied to various situations. Therefore, in a Usage Inference, you need to be able to take the definition you learned into the real world. Remembering the definition and using the word correctly are two different concepts. We supply a series of multiple-choice situations in which you need to figure out the best use of the word.

Let’s assume that you learned in a lesson that *specious* means “false or faulty reasoning that seems true” or “an argument that does not stand up to logical reasoning.”

Example:

When or where would making a *specious* argument most likely be challenged?

- A. on Friday night asking for the keys to the family car
- B. in a jury room debating the guilt of someone on trial
- C. with your family deciding on the price of a trip to Hawaii
- D. at school trying to convince your friend to go sky diving

While all the answers could be examples of making a specious argument, the one that might cause a problem is B, simply because any faulty argument would most likely be argued against by another juror. Obviously, faulty logic and arguments can be used in A, B, C, and D. After all, saying the wrong thing may prevent getting the keys, spending too much could ruin a trip, and sky diving is dangerous. These three situations, though, are less likely to have flawed logic called into question.

Another key to the correct answer is stated in the question, so make sure that you read that part carefully, as it frequently will narrow down your choices.

Reading Comprehension

Reading questions generally fall into several types.

1. *Identifying the main idea or the author’s purpose. In short, the question asks, “What is this selection about?”*

In some paragraphs, this is easy to spot because there are one or two ideas that leap from the paragraph. In some selections, however, this may be much more difficult, especially if there are convoluted sentences with clauses embedded within clauses. It also may be difficult in those selections in which there are inverted sentences (a sentence with the subject at the end) or elliptical sentences (a sentence in which a word or words are left out). All of these obstacles can be overcome if you take one sentence at a time and put it in your own words.

Consider the following sentence:

These writers either jot down their thoughts bit by bit, in short, ambiguous, and paradoxical sentences, which apparently mean much more than they say—of this kind of writing Schelling's treatises on natural philosophy are a splendid instance; or else they hold forth with a deluge of words and the most intolerable diffusiveness, as though no end of fuss were necessary to make the reader understand the deep meaning of their sentences, whereas it is some quite simple if not actually trivial idea, examples of which may be found in plenty in the popular works of Fichte, and the philosophical manuals of a hundred other miserable dunces.

But if we edit out some of the words, the main point of this sentence is obvious.

These writers either jot down their thoughts bit by bit, in short, ~~ambiguous, and paradoxical~~ sentences, which apparently mean much more than they say—of this kind of writing Schelling's treatises on natural philosophy are a splendid instance; or else they hold forth with a deluge of words ~~and the most intolerable diffusiveness~~, as though [it] ~~end of fuss~~ were necessary to make the reader understand the deep meaning of their sentences, whereas it is ~~some~~ [a] ~~quite~~ simple if not actually trivial idea, ~~examples of which may be found in plenty in the popular works of Fichte, and the philosophical manuals of a hundred other miserable dunces.~~

While the previous sentence needs only deletions to make it clear, this next one requires major revisions and must be read carefully and put into the reader's own words.

Some in their discourse desire rather commendation of wit, in being able to hold all arguments, than of judgment, in discerning what is true; as if it were a praise to know what might be said, and not what should be thought.

After studying it, a reader might revise the sentence as follows:

In their conversations, some people would rather win praise for their wit or style of saying something rather than win praise for their ability to judge between what is true or false—as if it were better to sound good regardless of the quality of thought.

2. *Identifying the stated or inferred meaning. Simply, what is the author stating or suggesting?*
3. *Identifying the tone or mood of the selection or the author's feeling.*

To answer this type of question, look closely at individual words and their connotations. For example, if an author describes one person as stubborn and another as firm, it tells you something of the author's feelings. In the same manner, if the author uses many words with harsh, negative connotations, he is conveying one mood; but if he uses words with milder negative connotations, he may be striving for quite another mood.

Pronunciation Guide

ă pat	ō boat, oh
ā aid, fey, pay	ōō took
â air, care, wear, ant	ōō boot, fruit
ā father	ô ball, haul
b bib	p pop
ch church	r roar
d deed	s miss, sauce, see
ē pet, pleasure	sh dish, ship
ē be, bee, easy, leisure	t tight
f fast, fife, off, phase, rough	th path, thin
g gag	<u>th</u> this, bathe
h hat	ũ cut, rough
hw which	û circle, firm, heard, term, turn, urge, word
ĩ pit	v cave, valve, vine
ī by, guy, pie	w with
î dear, deer, fierce, mere	y yes
j jury, joke	yōō abuse, use
k kiss, clean, quit	z rose, size, xylophone, zebra
oi soil, toy	zh garage, pleasure, vision
ou cow, out	ə about, silent, pencil, lemon, circus
ō closet, bother	ər butter

Lesson One

1. **abjure** (ăb jŏŏr') *verb* to renounce
The defendant *abjured* his former illegal activities and consequently received a lighter sentence.
syn: recant, retract *ant:* pledge
2. **anomaly** (ə nŏm'ə lē) *noun* a deviation from the norm; an odd or peculiar occurrence
The aggressive drill sergeant's interest in romantic poetry was considered an *anomaly* by his colleagues.
syn: abnormality, irregularity *ant:* norm
3. **equanimity** (ə kwə nĭm' ĭ tē) *noun* stability, calmness
Oddly enough, the plaintiff recounted the story of her attack with perfect *equanimity*.
syn: composure, sangfroid *ant:* perturbation
4. **estrangle** (ĭ strānj') *verb* to alienate
Jill's overbearing mother-in-law *estranged* Jill from her husband.
syn: disunite *ant:* reconcile
5. **flay** (flā) *verb* to whip; to remove skin
Many years ago, prisoners were sometimes tortured, then *flayed* alive by their captors.
syn: skin
6. **florid** (flŏr' ĭd) *adj.* rosy-colored, reddish
Her face was *florid* after her morning five-mile run.
syn: ruddy *ant:* pale, wan
7. **interminable** (ĭn tŭr' mə nə bəl) *adj.* tiresome and long
In grade school, the last few days before a holiday vacation always seemed *interminable*.
syn: unending, continuing
8. **lugubrious** (lə gŏŏ' brē əs) *adj.* mournful, gloomy
The comic tone of the play was undermined by the *lugubrious* funeral scene.
syn: sorrowful *ant:* joyful
9. **nondescript** (nŏn dĭ skrĭpt') *adj.* having no individuality
Inmates complain that each day in prison is uneventful, ordinary, and *nondescript*.
syn: dull *ant:* unusual
10. **propitious** (prə pĭsh' əs) *adj.* favorable; auspicious
Discovering the old manifest for the sunken Spanish galleon proved *propitious* since it also showed the location of the gold.
syn: promising *ant:* adverse

11. **rife** (rīf) *adj.* abundant, prevalent
Tense hostage situations are becoming more and more *rife* in modern society.
syn: dominant, full *ant:* scarce, rare
12. **truncate** (trūn' kāt) *verb* to shorten
The candidate *truncated* his campaign because of a family illness.
syn: abridge, abbreviate *ant:* lengthened
13. **ubiquitous** (yōō bīk' wī tās) *adj.* occurring everywhere; omnipresent
It was a horrible camping trip; the mosquitoes were *ubiquitous* and hungry.
syn: universal
14. **vernacular** (vər nāk' yə lər) *noun* everyday language
Use of slang, profanity, or *vernacular* is prohibited in scholarly papers.
syn: dialect
15. **zealous** (zēl' əs) *adj.* fervent; fanatical
The shaman was *zealous* about guarding his secret cures from outsiders.
syn: passionate, enthusiastic *ant:* apathetic

Exercise I Words in Context

Fill in the blanks with the correct vocabulary words needed to complete the sentences.

florid **abjure** **flayed** **equanimity** **propitious**

- A. The Pope spoke with _____, despite the angry words of his questioner.
- B. At the _____ moment, an umbrella was brought to shade the _____, sleeping tourist.
- C. In ancient times, priests were forced to _____ their beliefs to avoid being _____ alive.

truncated **nondescript** **lugubrious** **rife** **interminable**

- D. The spy's wait for his contact seemed _____ to him, especially since he was trying to appear _____ and ordinary.
- E. The activist's _____ speech was _____ after booing by protesters.
- F. The politician felt sure that every office was _____ with spies.

vernacular

ubiquitous

zealous

estranged

anomaly

- G. The _____ couple had no kind words for each other.
- H. Zoë became _____ about exercising after a(n) _____ in her blood test, though it had turned out to be a false alarm.
- I. Slang and _____ should be avoided in research papers; however, both seem nearly _____ in poor writers' styles.

Exercise II Roots, Prefixes, and Suffixes

Study the entries and answer the questions that follow.

The prefix *ab-* means “away.”

The root *jur* means “law” or “wealth.”

The root *equ* means “even” or “equal.”

The root *animus* means “spirit” or “mind.”

The root *termin* means “end” or “boundary.”

The root *flor* means “flower.”

1. *Equanimity* literally means _____.

List as many words as you can think of that contain the root *equ*.

2. If you *terminate* something, then you _____ it, or finish its _____.
When we *determine* something, we put the thought within _____, which prevents it from changing.
3. *Florid* means “reddish,” or “full in color,” as a person’s face might appear after exercising. Explain how you think *florid* acquired its meaning if the root *flor* means “flower.”
4. List all the words you can think of that contain the root *anim*.

Exercise III Usage Inferences

Choose the answer that best suits the situation.

1. Which would seem *interminable*?
 - A. awaiting test results
 - B. a kite in the wind
 - C. building a doghouse
 - D. eating supper
2. A *florid* person is
 - A. fast.
 - B. intelligent, nearly a genius.
 - C. tired from running.
 - D. red-faced.
3. An *anomaly* would most likely be found in a
 - A. map of America.
 - B. difficult puzzle.
 - C. test score.
 - D. blueprint for a home.

Exercise IV Reading Comprehension

Read the selection and answer the questions.

Many a traveller came out of his way to see me and the inside of my house, and, as an excuse for calling, asked for a glass of water. I told them that I drank at the pond, and pointed thither, offering to lend them a dipper. Far off as I lived, I was not exempted from that annual visitation which occurs, methinks, about the first of April, when every body is on the move; and I had my share of good luck, though there were some curious specimens among my visitors. Half-witted men from the almshouse and elsewhere came to see me; but I endeavored to make them exercise all the wit they had, and make their confessions to me; in such cases making wit the theme of our conversation; and so was compensated. Indeed I found some of them to be wiser than the so called overseers of the poor and selectmen of the town, and thought it was time that the tables were turned. With respect to wit, I learned that there was not much difference between the half and the whole. One day, in particular, an inoffensive, simple-minded pauper, whom with others I had often seen used as fencing stuff, standing or sitting on a bushel in the fields to keep cattle and himself from straying, visited me, and expressed a wish to live as I did. He told me, with the utmost simplicity and truth,

quite superior, or rather inferior, to any thing that is called humility, that he was “deficient in intellect.” These were his words. The Lord had made him so, yet he supposed the Lord cared as much for him as for another. “I have always been so,” said he, “from my childhood; I never had much mind; I was not like other children; I am weak in the head. It was the Lord’s will, I suppose.” And there he was to prove the truth of his words. He was a metaphysical puzzle to me. I have rarely met a fellow-man on such promising ground,—it was so simple and sincere and so true all that he said. And, true enough, in proportion as he appeared to humble himself was he exalted. I did not know at first but it was the result of a wise policy. It seemed that from such a basis of truth and frankness as the poor weak-headed pauper had laid, our intercourse might go forward to something better than the intercourse of sages.

—Henry David Thoreau

1. The author states that the simple people
 - A. had little to offer.
 - B. may be superior to the sage.
 - C. confessed to him, as if in a church.
 - D. proved to be no puzzle to him.
 - E. were very different from other townspeople.

2. The word *inferior* refers to the author’s feelings regarding his visitor’s
 - A. intellect.
 - B. humility.
 - C. poverty.
 - D. honesty.
 - E. curiosity.

3. During the beginning of April, the author
 - A. had many visitors desiring money.
 - B. engaged the simple-minded in intellectual games.
 - C. met with various “overseers.”
 - D. learned very little from his visitors.
 - E. looked forward to peace and quiet.

4. The best title for this work might be
 - A. The Lord’s Will.
 - B. With Respect to Wit.
 - C. Intellect vs. Stupidity.
 - D. Unexpected Understandings.
 - E. New England’s Poor.