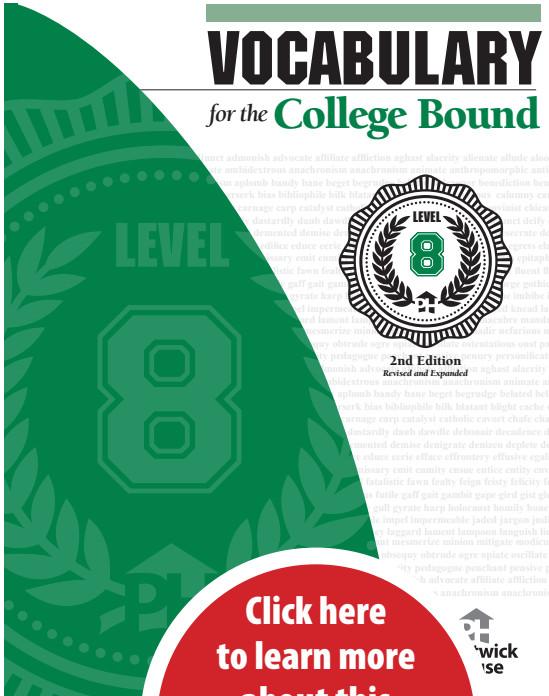




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2nd Edition

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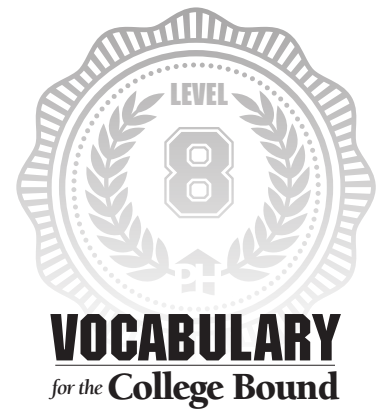
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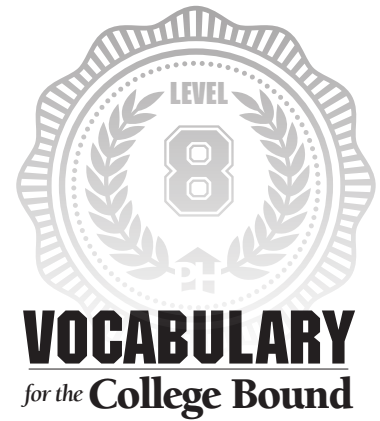
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Strategies for Completing Activities

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. **abstinence** (ăb' stĕ nəns) *noun* the practice of abstaining; doing without
Steve knew that only complete *abstinence* from candy would cure his addiction to sugar.
syn: self-denial *ant:* indulgence
2. **ambulatory** (ăm' byə lə tŏr ē) *adj.* able to walk; up and about
The *ambulatory* patients were led to basement shelters, but the bedridden patients had to wait for stretcher-bearers to carry them below.
3. **diatribe** (dī' ə trīb) *noun* a bitter and abusive criticism
When he began his customary *diatribe* about shiftless and rude teenagers, I just walked out.
4. **didactic** (dī dăk' tĭk) *adj.* intended to instruct, guide, or teach
Her poetry was so *didactic* that, although one learned a great deal about the topic, the poetry wasn't very good.
5. **diffident** (dif' ĭ dənt) *adj.* timid, shy; lacking in confidence
Unlike her sister, who is quite outgoing, Jan was a little *diffident*.
syn: reserved *ant:* confident, aggressive
6. **garrulous** (găr' ə ləs) *adj.* very talkative
Susan was so *garrulous* that Steve couldn't get a word in edgewise.
syn: verbose, loquacious *ant:* reticent, taciturn
7. **mandatory** (măn' də tŏr ē) *adj.* required; obligatory
In order to protect innocent victims, most states have *mandatory* auto insurance laws.
syn: compulsory *ant:* voluntary, optional
8. **morbid** (mŏr' bid) *adj.* preoccupied with gruesome or gloomy matters; grisly
It was such a *morbid* story that it depressed me.
syn: morose, glum *ant:* cheerful
9. **munificent** (myŏŏ nĭf' ĭ sənt) *adj.* very generous in giving; lavish
While the oil company's offer was *munificent*, the senator could not accept it because the maximum contribution was \$1,000.
syn: liberal *ant:* stingy, penurious,
parsimonious
10. **scoff** (skŏf) *verb* to show derision or mocking contempt
He *scoffed* at the notion of taking a lower-paying job, but eventually he was forced to do so.
syn: ridicule, deride *ant:* praise

Exercise I Words in Context

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

diatribe

scoffed

didactic

abstinence

- A. The idea of _____ from using social networking sites was _____ at by everyone in the room.
- B. When I told her that I thought her son's poetry was too _____, she launched into a blistering _____.

mandatory

garrulous

morbid

diffident

ambulatory

munificent

- C. Susan was voted "most outgoing" by her classmates because she was very _____. Meanwhile, John, who was somewhat _____, hoped that someday he could be as relaxed in public as Susan.
- D. Although distraught as a result of the bus accident, the mobile victims assisted those who were not _____. As usually happens, the accident quickly drew a large number of _____ curiosity-seekers.
- E. Although he emphasized that a contribution to his election campaign was not _____, he let his audience know that the more _____ their contribution, the quicker they might expect him to respond to their requests.

Exercise II Roots, Prefixes, and Suffixes

Study the entries and answer the questions that follow.

The prefix *in-* means "not."

The root *cred* means "to believe."

The root *port* means "to carry."

The suffixes *-ible/able* mean "able to," "capable of."

1. Looking at the prefix, root, and suffix of the word *incredible*, the definition for it must be _____. Someone or something that is said to be *credible* is something that is _____. If a story has no *credibility*, it has no _____; if we give *credence* to a story, we are _____. A person who is described as *credulous* has a tendency to believe too quickly what he is told; therefore, to describe a skeptical person who expressed disbelief, we would say that he was _____.

2. Define the following words:

import
deport
report
export
portable
porter
transport

Exercise III Usage Inferences

Choose the answer that best suits the situation.

1. If you are *diffident*, you most likely would not choose this as a profession.
 - A. librarian
 - B. teacher
 - C. salesman
 - D. carpenter
2. What would be the most *munificent* thing a multimillionaire could do with \$100,000?
 - A. invest it in bonds that pay 10% interest
 - B. invest it in safe but lower-paying government bonds
 - C. lend the money out at a low rate of interest
 - D. donate the money to a hospital building fund
3. Who is most likely to *scoff* at the performance of the lead actor in a high school play?
 - A. the lead's boyfriend
 - B. the lead's parents
 - C. the lead's co-star
 - D. the lead's understudy

Exercise IV Reading Comprehension

Read the selection and answer the questions.

A study released last week by the U.S. Department of Education reported that nearly half of all adult Americans cannot read, write and calculate well enough to function fully in today's society. It also reported that people in their early twenties did poorer this time than when the same age group was tested in 1985. The study, based on lengthy interviews with more than 26,000 Americans over age 15, found that 47 percent of all adults cannot calculate the difference in price between two items, use a bus schedule correctly, or explain distinctions between two types of employee benefits.

"This report is a wake-up call to the sheer magnitude of illiteracy in this country and underscores literacy's strong connection to economic status," said a spokesman for the Education Department. "It paints a picture of a society in which the vast majority of Americans do not know that they don't have the skills they need to earn a living in our increasingly technological society and international marketplace."

The study is the second such survey sponsored by the federal government in two decades. This study, however, probed more deeply than the previous survey to assess how well people understand English. The researchers asked the people to demonstrate what they can do with what they know. Federal officials said they hope to use the study as a baseline for measuring future progress.

The questions and tasks in the survey were assigned a number value from 0 to 500 based on their degree of difficulty. The scores were then grouped into five levels. Adults who scored at the highest level—about one-fifth of those surveyed—could handle such complex, challenging tasks as reading a text and summarizing two ways lawyers could challenge prospective jurors. Those at the bottom of the scale had the rudimentary skills necessary to identify a country in a short article; but they could not handle slightly more complex tasks, such as locating an intersection on a street map.

Of the lowest-scoring group, which includes 40 million to 45 million Americans, one-fourth were immigrants who may have been learning English. A third of the group tested were 65 or older; and 26 percent said they had physical, mental, or health conditions which kept them from fully participating in work, school, or housework. Some members of this group, however, were also high school graduates. Among the adults with high school diplomas who had participated in the survey, between 16 percent and 20 percent scored at the bottom of the scale.

The researchers were surprised to find that most people whose skills were found to be at the two lowest levels said they could read and write English well. Yet that group was also poorer and had lower levels of employment than any other group.

Young adults between ages 21 and 25 generally scored in the middle range on the survey. They could, on average, write a brief letter explaining an error on a credit card bill, but they could not use information from a news article to calculate the amount of money it costs to raise a child.

The average level of literacy—a score of 293 on the scale—represents a decline of 11 to 14 points since 1985, when a similar survey of young adults was conducted. The decline, however, was partly due to immigration patterns, the report says. It points out that the number of young Hispanic adults taking part in the survey more than doubled, from 7 percent in 1985 to 15 percent in 1992. Since many of those individuals were born outside the United States and still learning English, it is expected that in time their scores will increase.

1. What would be the best title for the passage?
 - A. Reading Skills Remain Poor
 - B. Many Adults Lack Needed Skills
 - C. Decline in Adult Skills Continues
 - D. Literacy Skills in Adults Decline
 - E. Lack of Skills Limits Employability

2. The article states or implies that
 - A. older people over 65 scored higher than middle-aged people 21 to 45.
 - B. the government will do further testing of this kind.
 - C. the overall scores were higher this year than the scores in 1985.
 - D. the majority of the lowest-scoring group were immigrants.
 - E. Both B and C are correct.

3. The article states or implies that
 - A. among adults, some who scored highest could not locate an intersection on a street map.
 - B. the scores of Hispanics were affected by the fact that English was not their first language.
 - C. how well you can or cannot read will affect how much money you earn at work.
 - D. literacy has increased since 1985.
 - E. Both B and C are correct.

4. One might infer from this article that the researchers
 - A. expected that people over 65, as a group, would read less well than young adults between the ages of 21 and 25.
 - B. did not expect to find that people with high school diplomas would be in the bottom group.
 - C. found that people generally were aware of the strengths and weaknesses in reading.
 - D. Both A and B are correct.
 - E. A, B, and C are correct.