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# VOCABULARY

for the *College Bound*



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**Prestwick  
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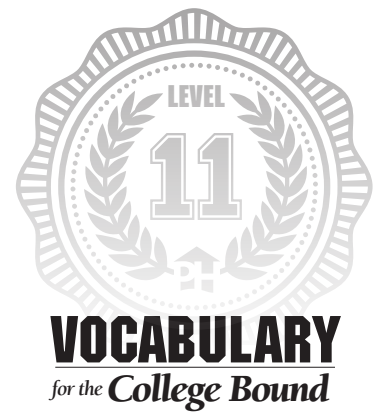
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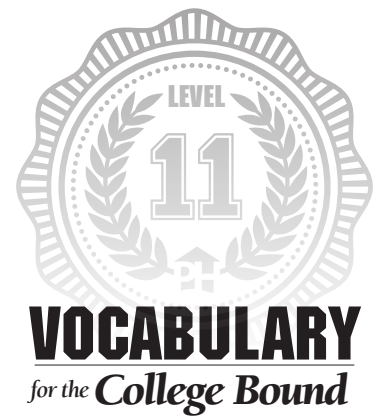
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## Strategies for Completing Activities

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### 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 Examples:

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.”

Examples:

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	ö	took
ā	aid, fey, pay	ōō	boot, fruit
â	air, care, wear, ant	ô	ball, haul
ä	father	p	pop
b	bib	r	roar
ch	church	s	miss, sauce, see
d	deed	sh	dish, ship
ě	pet, pleasure	t	tight
ē	be, bee, easy, leisure	th	path, thin
f	fast, fife, off, phase, rough	<u>th</u>	this, bathe
g	gag	ů	cut, rough
h	hat	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
ö	closet, bother	ər	butter
ō	boat, oh		



## Lesson One

1. **adroit** (ə droit') *adj.* skillful, clever  
Everyone knew that he was *adroit* with figures, but he lacked the facility for public speaking.  
*syn:* dexterous, apt *ant:* clumsy, awkward
  
2. **adulterate** (ə dül' tə rāt) *verb* to make impure; contaminate  
*adj.* impure  
The fumes from the automobiles *adulterate* the air.  
The police were concerned about all the *adulterated* drugs on the street.  
*ant:* refine, refined
  
3. **adventitious** (əd vĕn tĭsh' əs) *adj.* accidental; nonessential  
The scientists announced the breakthrough at a press conference and admitted that it had been an *adventitious* outcome.  
*syn:* incidental
  
4. **aegis** (ē' jĭs) *noun* a shield; protection; sponsorship  
The candidate felt he had a chance in the election because of the *aegis* of a former officeholder.  
*syn:* backing
  
5. **aesthetic** (ĕs thĕt' ĭk) *adj.* pertaining to beauty  
The house was a bargain financially, but it lacked any *aesthetic* quality.  
*syn:* artistic
  
6. **affectation** (ă fĕk tā' shən) *noun* a phony attitude; pose  
John felt that the outspoken Ruth was the only girl there who did not have any *affectations*.  
*syn:* insincerity, sham *ant:* sincerity, genuineness
  
7. **affinity** (ə fĭn' ĭ tē) *noun* an attraction to  
The young man had an *affinity* for fast cars and easy money.  
*syn:* partiality, fondness *ant:* aversion
  
8. **affluence** (ă flōō əns) *noun* wealth; richness  
Although Paul's family had much *affluence*, he was content to make do without their help.  
*syn:* abundance *ant:* poverty, destitution

9. **agape** (ə gāp') *adj.* open-mouthed; surprised; agog  
Even the judge was *agape* when the witness told the ridiculous story in court.  
*syn:* awestruck
10. **aggrandize** (ə grăn' dīz) *verb* to enlarge; expand  
Much of what they did was not to aid their country, but to *aggrandize* their own positions.  
*syn:* increase, augment, enrich *ant:* decrease, diminish
11. **altruism** (ăl' trōō ĭz əm) *noun* a concern for others; generosity  
Ben's *altruism* was apparent as he stopped at the scene of the accident to offer his assistance.  
*syn:* unselfishness, magnanimity *ant:* selfishness, egoism
12. **ambiguous** (ăm bĭg' yōō əs) *adj.* open to more than one interpretation  
The candidate's *ambiguous* comments tended to confuse the issue even more.  
*syn:* unclear, uncertain, vague *ant:* explicit, definite
13. **amoral** (ā mōr' əl) *adj.* lacking a sense of right and wrong  
Although a greedy man, he was not *amoral*; there were some things he would not do for money.
14. **amorphous** (ə mōr' fəs) *adj.* shapeless, formless, vague  
The essay was due in two days, but Steve couldn't grasp the topic, which remained *amorphous* in his mind.
15. **animosity** (ăn ə mōs' ĭ tē) *noun* hatred  
There was a general feeling of *animosity* toward the judge for giving the boys such a harsh sentence.  
*syn:* ill will, hostility *ant:* friendliness, congeniality

## Exercise I Words in Context

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

**affectations      adroit      affluence      adulterated      affinity**

- A. Because he was very \_\_\_\_\_ at manipulating stock purchases, his \_\_\_\_\_ grew rapidly. Despite his new wealth, however, he did not develop those \_\_\_\_\_ usually associated with the nouveau riche. But he did develop an \_\_\_\_\_ for life in the fast lane. It was this lifestyle and \_\_\_\_\_ drugs that killed him.

**amorphous      amoral      altruistic      animosity      aggrandizement**

- B. His \_\_\_\_\_ toward them had no particular focus; rather, there was an \_\_\_\_\_ quality to it. While not a religious man, he disliked churchgoers because he thought them to be \_\_\_\_\_. They were not at all \_\_\_\_\_; in fact, he thought they were selfish. In those rare instances when they did something for someone, it was done more for self-\_\_\_\_\_ than from a desire to help others.

**adventitious      agape      aesthetic      aegis      ambiguous**

- C. Al thought seeing Amy at the party was \_\_\_\_\_. Since he was no longer under the \_\_\_\_\_ of his uncle, he had lost much of his influence at the museum. As he explained his plan to regain power, Amy stood \_\_\_\_\_ in disbelief. She told him in no \_\_\_\_\_ terms that she would have absolutely nothing to do with his plan and was interested in art from an \_\_\_\_\_ point of view, not as a wedge to gain power.

## Exercise II Roots, Prefixes, and Suffixes

Study the entries and answer the questions that follow.

The root *anim* means “feeling,” “spirit,” “life.”

The root *sec/sect* means “cut.”

The root *cand* means “white,” “shining.”

The root *terra* means “earth.”

The root *firma* means “solid.”

The prefix *uni-* means “one.”

The prefix *extra-* means “outside.”

1. The literal meaning of *unanimous* is \_\_\_\_\_; if you are filled with strong feelings against someone, you are filled with \_\_\_\_\_. But *animation* is the act of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Something that is *incandescent* is \_\_\_\_\_; but the word *candid*, meaning “pure, sincere,” comes from the same root. What is the word’s probable evolution?
3. List other words that use *cand* as a root.
4. The phrase “terra firma” refers to \_\_\_\_\_, but the word \_\_\_\_\_ refers to something from beyond this planet.
5. Give a literal meaning for the following:  
bisect  
intersect  
sector

### Exercise III Usage Inferences

Choose the answer that best suits the situation.

1. Which is most likely to be described as *adulterated*?
  - A. a mountain stream
  - B. a movie on television
  - C. a hard fought football game
  - D. a fancy dinner party
  
2. Who is the person most likely to be described as displaying an *affinity* for something?
  - A. a first-year English teacher
  - B. a person who has 15 cats
  - C. a dentist who has retired
  - D. a student who hates homework
  
3. Which directions are the best example of something that is *ambiguous*?
  - A. "After you pass the bank, turn left at the first traffic light."
  - B. "Remember, this room can never get too cold."
  - C. "Wherever you go, remember that rule."
  - D. "I want you to stop the fighting right now."