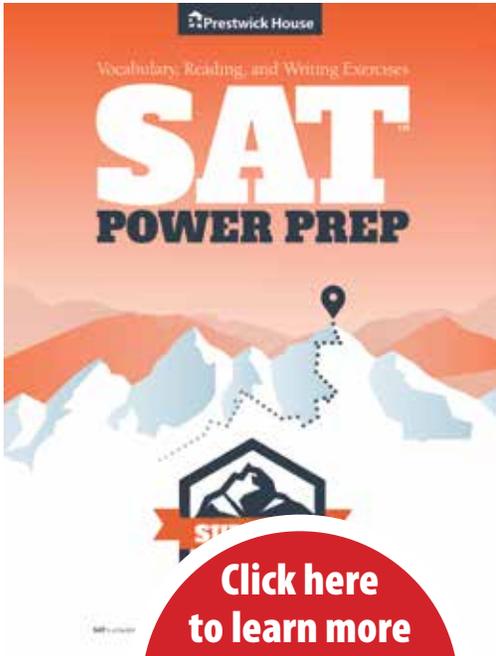




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## POWER PREP



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# Reading Test

Each passage or pair of passages, some of which are accompanied by graphics such as maps, charts, or graphs, is followed by a set of questions. Read the passage and then choose the best answer to each of the questions.

## Lesson 1

Questions 1–11 are based on the following passage.

This passage is adapted from Edgar Allan Poe’s short story “The Imp of the Perverse,” published 1845.

In the consideration of the **faculties** and **impulses**—of the *prima mobilia* of the human soul, the phrenologists have failed to make room for a **propensity** which, although obviously existing as a radical, primitive, irreducible **sentiment**, has been equally overlooked by all the moralists who have preceded them. In the pure arrogance of the reason, we have all overlooked it. We have suffered its existence to escape our senses solely through want of belief—of faith;—whether it be faith in Revelation, or faith in the Kabbalah. The idea of it has never occurred to us, simply because of its supererogation. We saw no need of impulse—for the propensity. We could not perceive its necessity. We could not understand, that is to say, we could not have understood, had the notion of this *primum mobile* ever **obtruded** itself;—we could not have understood in what manner it might be made to further the objects of humanity, either temporal or eternal. It cannot be denied that phrenology and, in great measure, all metaphysicianism have been **concocted** from theory. The intellectual or logical man, rather than the understanding or observant man, set himself to imagine designs—to dictate purposes to God. Having thus **fathomed**, to his satisfaction, the intentions of Jehovah, out of these intentions he built his innumerable systems of mind.

Real evidence would have brought science to admit, as an **innate** and primitive principle of human action, a **paradoxical** something, which we may call perverseness, for want of a more characteristic term. In the sense I intend, it is, in fact, a mobile without motive. Through its promptings we act without comprehensible object; or, if this shall be understood as a contradiction in terms, we may so far modify the proposition as to say, that through its promptings, we act, for the reason that we should not. In theory, no reason can be more unreasonable; but, in fact, there is none more strong.

With certain minds, under certain conditions it becomes absolutely irresistible. I am not more certain that I breathe, than that the assurance of the wrong or error of any action is often the one unconquerable force which **impels** us, and alone impels us to its prosecution. Nor will this overwhelming tendency to do wrong for the wrong’s sake, admit of analysis, or resolution into ulterior elements. It is radical, a primitive impulse—elementary. It will be said, I am aware, that when we persist in acts because we feel we should not persist in them, our conduct is but a modification of that which ordinarily springs from a tendency to defend or resist. But a glance will show the fallacy of this idea.

Combativeness has, for its essence, the necessity of self-defense. It is our safeguard against injury. Its principle regards our well-being; and thus the desire to be well is excited simultaneously with its development. It follows, that the desire to be well must be excited simultaneously with any principle which shall be merely a modification of combativeness, but in the case of that something which I term perverseness, the desire to be well is aroused, but a strongly **antagonistic** sentiment prevails.

An appeal to one’s own heart is, after all, the best reply to the **sophistry** just noticed. No one who trustingly consults and thoroughly questions his own soul, will be disposed to deny the entire radicalness of the propensity in question. It is not more incomprehensible than distinctive. There lives no man who at some period has not been tormented, for example, by an earnest desire to tantalize a listener by **circumlocution**. The speaker is aware that he displeases, he has every intention to please; he is usually **curt**, precise, and clear; the most **laconic** and luminous language is struggling for utterance upon his tongue; it is only with difficulty that he restrains himself from giving it flow; he dreads and **deprecates** the anger of him whom he addresses; yet, the thought strikes him, that by certain involutions and parentheses this anger may be **engendered**. That single thought is enough. The impulse increases to a wish, the wish to a desire, the desire to an uncontrollable longing,





## Lesson 1 continued:

and the longing (to the deep regret and **mortification** of the speaker, and in defiance of all consequences) is indulged.

80 We stand upon the brink of a **precipice**. We peer into the abyss—we grow sick and dizzy. Our first impulse is to shrink from the danger. Unaccountably we remain. By slow degrees our sickness and dizziness and horror become merged in a cloud of unnamable feeling. 85 By **gradations**, still more imperceptible, this cloud assumes shape, as did the vapor from the bottle out of which arose the genie in the Arabian Nights. But out of this our cloud upon the precipice's edge, there grows 90 into palpability, a shape, far more terrible than any genius or any demon of a tale, and yet it is but a thought, although a fearful one, and one which chills the very marrow of our bones with the fierceness of the delight of its horror. It is merely the idea of what would be our 95 sensations during the sweeping precipitancy of a fall from such a height. And this fall—this rushing annihilation—for the very reason that it involves that one most ghastly and loathsome of all the most ghastly and loathsome images of death and suffering which have 100 ever presented themselves to our imagination—for this very cause do we now the most vividly desire it. And because our reason violently deters us from the brink, therefore do we the most **impetuously** approach it. There is no passion in nature so demoniacally impatient 105 as that of him who, shuddering upon the edge of a precipice, thus **meditates** a plunge. To indulge, for a moment, in any attempt at thought, is to be inevitably lost; for reflection but urges us to forbear, and therefore it is, I say, that we cannot. If there be no friendly arm to check us, or if we fail in a sudden effort to **prostrate** 110 ourselves backward from the abyss, we plunge, and are destroyed.

Examine these and similar actions as we will, we shall find them resulting solely from the spirit of the 115 Perverse. We perpetrate them merely because we feel that we should not. Beyond or behind this there is no intelligible principle; and we might, indeed, deem this perverseness a direct instigation of the arch-fiend, were it not occasionally known to operate in furtherance of good. 120

I have said thus much, that in some measure I may answer your question—that I may explain to you why I am here—that I may assign to you something that shall have at least the faint aspect of a cause for my wearing 125 these fetters, and for my tenanting this cell of the

condemned. Had I not been thus prolix, you might either have misunderstood me altogether, or, with the rabble, have fancied me mad. As it is, you will easily perceive that I am one of the many uncounted victims of the Imp of the Perverse. 130

It is impossible that any deed could have been wrought with a more thorough deliberation. For weeks, for months, I pondered upon the means of the murder. I rejected a thousand schemes, because their 135 accomplishment involved a chance of detection. At length, in reading some French memoirs, I found an account of a nearly fatal illness that occurred to Madame Pilau, through the agency of a candle accidentally 140 poisoned. The idea struck my fancy at once. I knew my victim's habit of reading in bed. I knew, too, that his apartment was narrow and ill-ventilated. But I need not vex you with impertinent details. I need not describe the easy artifices by which I substituted, in his bed-room candle stand, a wax-light of my own making for the one 145 which I there found. The next morning he was discovered dead in his bed, and the coroner's verdict was—'Death by the visitation of God.'

Having inherited his estate, all went well with me for years. The idea of detection never once entered my 150 brain. Of the remains of the fatal taper I had myself carefully disposed. I had left no shadow of a clue by which it would be possible to convict, or even suspect, me of the crime. It is inconceivable how rich a sentiment of satisfaction arose in my bosom as I reflected upon my 155 absolute security. For a very long period of time I was accustomed to revel in this sentiment. It afforded me more real delight than all the mere worldly advantages accruing from my sin. But there arrived at length an epoch, from which the pleasurable feeling grew, by 160 scarcely perceptible gradations, into a haunting and harassing thought. It harassed me because it haunted. I could scarcely get rid of it for an instant. It is quite a common thing to be thus annoyed with the ringing in our ears, or rather in our memories, of the burthen of some 165 ordinary song, or some unimpressive snatches from an opera. Nor will we be the less tormented if the song in itself be good, or the opera air meritorious. In this manner, at last, I would perpetually catch myself pondering upon my security, and repeating, in a low under-tone, the phrase, 'I am safe.' 170

One day, whilst sauntering along the streets, I arrested myself in the act of murmuring, half aloud, these customary syllables. In a fit of **petulance** I





## Lesson 1 continued:

remodeled them thus: “I am safe—I am safe—yes—if I  
175 be not fool enough to make open confession.”

No sooner had I spoken these words, than I felt an  
icy chill creep to my heart. I had had some experience in  
these fits of perversity (whose nature I have been at  
some trouble to explain), and I remembered well that in  
180 no instance I had successfully resisted their attacks. And  
now my own casual self-suggestion, that I might  
possibly be fool enough to confess the murder of which I  
had been guilty, confronted me, as if the very ghost of  
him whom I had murdered—and beckoned me on to  
185 death.

At first, I made an effort to shake off this  
nightmare of the soul. I walked vigorously—faster—still  
faster—at length I ran. I felt a maddening desire to  
shriek aloud. Every succeeding wave of thought  
190 overwhelmed me with new terror, for, alas! I well, too  
well, understood that to think, in my situation, was to be  
lost. I still quickened my pace. I bounded like a madman  
through the crowded **thoroughfares**. At length, the  
populace took the alarm and pursued me. I felt then the  
195 **consummation** of my fate. Could I have torn out my  
tongue, I would have done it—but a rough voice  
resounded in my ears—a rougher grasp seized me by the  
shoulder. I turned—I gasped for breath. For a moment I  
experienced all the pangs of suffocation; I became blind,  
200 and deaf, and giddy; and then some invisible fiend, I  
thought, struck me with his broad palm upon the back.  
The long-imprisoned secret burst forth from my soul.

They say that I spoke with a distinct enunciation,  
but with marked emphasis and passionate hurry, as if in  
205 dread of interruption before concluding the brief but  
pregnant sentences that consigned me to the hangman  
and to hell.

Having related all that was necessary for the fullest  
judicial conviction, I fell prostrate in a **swoon**.

210 But why shall I say more? Today I wear these  
chains, and am here! Tomorrow I shall be fetterless!—  
but where?

**1**

As it is used in line 2, the phrase *prima mobilia* most  
nearly means

- A) existence.
- B) rights.
- C) motives.
- D) errors.

**2**

The specific human tendency, or propensity, at the  
central focus of the passage is best described as

- A) lying frequently.
- B) living in the past.
- C) inventing illnesses.
- D) impulsive behavior.

**3**

Choose the lines from the passage that provide the  
best evidence for your answer to the previous  
question.

- A) lines 2-3 (“phrenologists have...propensity”)
- B) lines 6-7 (“In the...it”)
- C) lines 12-13 (“We saw...propensity”)
- D) lines 13-16 (“We could...itself”)

**4**

According to the author, the type of people who  
claim to understand the workings of the human mind  
are people who

- A) ignore reality.
- B) see more than others do.
- C) understand better.
- D) are unintelligent.

**5**

Choose the term the author uses to describe the  
human tendency to do “wrong for the wrong’s sake.”

- A) proposition
- B) perverseness
- C) revelation
- D) phrenology





## Lesson 1 continued:

**6**

The impulsive tendency, the author reasons, cannot be a function of self-defense because

- A) it occurs only in dangerous situations.
- B) human reason controls physical response.
- C) criminals usually exhibit the tendency.
- D) it sometimes undermines personal safety.

**7**

As it is used in line 67, the word *circumlocution* most nearly means

- A) speaking in a reluctant tone.
- B) skill in efficient conversation in discussions about art, science, or history.
- C) intentionally dragging out a story by being vague.
- D) accidentally giving away secrets or divulging personal information.

**8**

The main purpose of paragraph 4 (lines 81-112) is to

- A) provide an example situation in which perverseness manifests.
- B) refute the scientific theories about the cause of human impulsiveness.
- C) relate perverseness to a personal anecdote of the narrator.
- D) explain the fragile psychology of the human mind.

**9**

The narrator claims that he is

- A) without a conscience.
- B) a master of self-discipline.
- C) guided by his faith.
- D) no match against impulsive behavior.

**10**

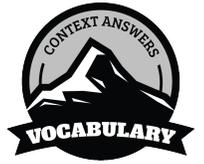
Choose the lines from the passage that provide the best evidence for your answer to the previous question.

- A) lines 176-177 (“No sooner...heart”)
- B) lines 179-180 (“I remembered...attacks”)
- C) lines 186-187 (“At first...soul”)
- D) lines 189-192 (“Every succeeding...lost”)

**11**

Of the following choices, the overall passage is best described as

- A) the confession of a murderer.
- B) an argument against the legal system.
- C) a scientific report.
- D) a personal narrative.



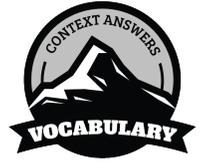
Lesson 1 continued:

Vocabulary: Context Answers

The following sentences contain vocabulary words used in the reading passage. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence. There may be more than one technically correct answer, but one will better exemplify the italicized vocabulary word than the others will.

- 1) Of all the *faculties* that Marian lost in the accident, she missed her \_\_\_\_\_ the most.
  - A. secretary
  - B. dog
  - C. memories
  - D. pink purse
  - E. coworkers
- 2) Sophia considered her *innate* desire to help others to be a[n] \_\_\_\_\_ of her identity.
  - A. indicator
  - B. essential part
  - C. false representation
  - D. unnecessary piece
  - E. criticism
- 3) Winifred had no tolerance for David's *sophistry*, so she pointed out his \_\_\_\_\_ to everyone in attendance at the debate.
  - A. miscalculation
  - B. ignorance
  - C. excellent argument
  - D. deceptive reasoning
  - E. poor manners
- 4) Rachel was not offended by Ethan's \_\_\_\_\_ answer; he was often unintentionally *curt*.
  - A. short and impolite
  - B. soft and sweet
  - C. loud and angry
  - D. offensive and thoughtless
  - E. quick and excited
- 5) Microblogging platforms like Twitter require *laconic* writing because each tweet must be \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. interesting
  - B. brief
  - C. multifaceted
  - D. beautiful
  - E. accessible
- 6) Every time her older brother *deprecates* her, Sally feels \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. better
  - B. upset
  - C. belittled
  - D. pleased
  - E. excited

## SAT Power Prep: Summit



### Lesson 1 continued:

- 7) *Gradations* of dress colors at the school dance \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. changed throughout the night
  - B. meant that most wore the same color palette
  - C. meant that everyone wore either red or purple
  - D. required everyone to wear white
  - E. progressed from deep red to lavender
- 8) Making *impetuous* decisions will not be good for the business; instead, \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. consider each option carefully
  - B. act on impulse
  - C. consult with no one
  - D. be willing to change
  - E. arrive at a solution quickly
- 9) Attempts to compromise brought out Sandy's *petulance*; she was \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. pleased when everyone agreed
  - B. nervous when the compromise took too long
  - C. accepting of change
  - D. upset when she did not get what she wanted
  - E. glad to facilitate the discussion
- 10) A[n] \_\_\_\_\_ proved to be the *consummation* of Albert's string of crimes.
- A. arrest
  - B. trial
  - C. guilty verdict
  - D. interrogation
  - E. arraignment
- 11) To Allison's *mortification*, her family shouted her name as she walked out onto the basketball court, \_\_\_\_\_ her.
- A. pleasing
  - B. embarrassing
  - C. upsetting
  - D. cheering for
  - E. relieving
- 12) What seemed most ridiculous to Aaliyah was the \_\_\_\_\_ her friends had *concocted*.
- A. idea
  - B. window
  - C. photograph
  - D. outfit
  - E. plan



Lesson 1 continued:

Writing Practice

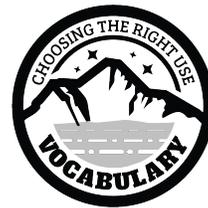
The underlined portion of each sentence possibly contains a flaw related to pronoun use. Select the answer that best corrects the flaw. Select NO CHANGE if the underlined portion is correct.

- 1) The host asked each of the party guests to bring their dish to the potluck dinner.
  - A. NO CHANGE
  - B. to bring his or her
  - C. to bring one's
  - D. to brings their
- 2) I'm not sure; is it both your brothers or just your brother Ken who has skipped a grade?
  - A. NO CHANGE
  - B. have skipped
  - C. had skipped
  - D. are skipping
- 3) That evening, some of the chickens was eaten by a fox.
  - A. NO CHANGE
  - B. was ate
  - C. have been eaten
  - D. were eaten
- 4) Every cat will meow until their owner remembers to feed it.
  - A. NO CHANGE
  - B. his
  - C. her
  - D. its
- 5) The movie's cast were rehearsing their lines.
  - A. NO CHANGE
  - B. was rehearsing their lines
  - C. were rehearsing our lines
  - D. was rehearsing its lines
- 6) The laundry detergent restored the grass-stained pants to its original condition.
  - A. NO CHANGE
  - B. their
  - C. it's
  - D. the



Lesson 1 continued:

- 7) If there are any discrepancies in the paycheck, please make sure to report it to the payroll manager.
- A. NO CHANGE
  - B. If there are any discrepancy in the paycheck, please make sure to report it to the payroll manager.
  - C. If there are any discrepancies in the paycheck, please make sure to report them to the payroll manager.
  - D. If there is any discrepancies in the paycheck, please make sure to report it to the payroll manager.
- 8) The star swimmer always wins because they have no hesitation when the gun signals the start of the race.
- A. NO CHANGE
  - B. he or she have
  - C. they has
  - D. she has
- 9) I read a book about the Mafia called *The Valachi Papers* that reveal a series of amazing secrets about the mob.
- A. NO CHANGE
  - B. *Papers* that reveals a series of amazing secrets
  - C. *Papers* that reveal amazing secrets
  - D. *Papers*, that reveals a series of amazing secrets
- 10) Neither Mrs. Herman, the manager, nor the employees want to give up his or her break to attend the company seminar.
- A. NO CHANGE
  - B. her
  - C. their
  - D. one's

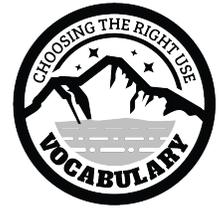


Lesson 1 continued:

Vocabulary: Choosing the Right Use

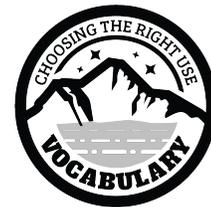
The following sentences contain vocabulary words used in the reading passage. Identify the sentence or sentences that use the italicized vocabulary word properly. We have changed the form of some vocabulary words to provide new contexts; for example, some adjectives and verbs have been used as nouns.

- 1)
  - A. “Explain to me the *faculty* of having a carpeted ceiling; the idea just sounds useless,” said Dan.
  - B. My mother has the unexplainable *faculty* of being able to find anything that is missing in my bedroom.
  - C. Contestants on the game show had to defend their inventions, discussing the many *faculties* of using each one.
  - D. The sociopath exhibits none of the emotional *faculties* that well-adjusted people employ daily, such as caring, closeness, empathy, or compassion.
  
- 2)
  - A. As the roller coaster picked up speed, Danica felt the *impulse* of the car as it bumped over the tracks.
  - B. The most agonizing aspect of maintaining a diet is resisting the *impulse* to have a piece of chocolate here and there.
  - C. Seeing her favorite brand of shoe in the store window, Ms. Shuster was overcome with the *impulse* to immediately purchase a pair.
  - D. Alec failed to notice the teacher’s negative comments on his essay; needless to say, the *impulse* took him by surprise.
  
- 3)
  - A. It is polite not to talk with your friends during a movie, as the chatter might *obtrude* upon the enjoyment of others.
  - B. The knights drew their swords and readied their bows and arrows to do battle against the army that was *obtruding* the castle.
  - C. The tall new apartment building on Main Street *obtruded* on the citizens’ view of the annual fireworks display.
  - D. Jerome enlisted security guards to stand outside of his dressing room to make sure that no wild fans could *obtrude* his private space.
  
- 4)
  - A. Frankenstein *concocted* a plan to create a new being and bring it to life using the power of lightning.
  - B. I could barely believe the itinerary that Mom had *concocted* for Thanksgiving; she expected us to attend four different dinners.
  - C. Mr. Gendler quickly *concocted* Amar’s suggestion to have class outside, claiming that students would become too easily distracted.
  - D. Despite the fact that the congressman had already *concocted* Diana’s proposal, she continued to petition for it all over the state.



Lesson 1 continued:

- 5) A. Doris and Dean *fathomed* their three children into the living room and announced, “We’re having another baby!”  
 B. A lover of bread, Bethany could not *fathom* what it would be like to have to maintain a gluten-free diet.  
 C. Every year, Marvel and DC Comics enthusiasts *fathom* for an event called Comic-Con.  
 D. “Kids in high school do not *fathom* just how much fun college is,” boasted Maria.
- 6) A. The “bystander effect” occurs when a person is not *impelled* to intervene in a conflict between two strangers because he or she assumes that someone else will help.  
 B. The grumpy old man installed tall electric fences to *impel* the neighborhood kids from trespassing on his property.  
 C. “Is it the causes that *impel* you to attend all these charitable fundraisers, or are you just coming for the food?” asked Lorinda.  
 D. Soup kitchens do not *impel* homelessness, but they do at least provide an important resource for people in need.
- 7) A. Fans eagerly awaited the third installment of the book series, as the second novel had had quite an *antagonistic* ending.  
 B. Loki the Bearded Dragon, whose favorite activity was eating, seemed to think that being fed crickets was the most *antagonistic* event of the week.  
 C. Rory’s *antagonistic* roommate purposely left dirty dishes in the sink just to infuriate her.  
 D. Whenever Hanna’s brother acted *antagonistically* toward her, she usually ended up running to her parents, sobbing.
- 8) A. The explorer raced through the underground tunnel, hoping to find the luxurious *sentiment* before the falling boulders blocked his path, or worse—crushed him.  
 B. As Mindy professed her undying love for Reggie, he realized that he did not hold the same *sentiment* for her.  
 C. Legend tells of a hidden *sentiment* buried deep underneath the Roman ruins—a statue made entirely of gold and silver.  
 D. Everyone in the courtroom seemed to experience a similar *sentiment*: They felt sympathetic toward the defendant, who seemed to have been framed.



## Lesson 1 continued:

- 9) A. The *curt* distance between my house and Brenda’s allowed us to spend time together almost every day.  
 B. “I can’t tell if Aimee is sending *curt* messages on purpose, or if she is just really busy,” complained Adam.  
 C. Billy’s *curt* responses to my questions about the scandal indicated just how angry he felt about what had happened.  
 D. Even relatively tall people appeared *curt* when standing next to Leonardo, who was almost seven feet.
- 10) A. Perched on a *precipice*, Dylan could see the entirety of another mountain far in the distance.  
 B. “Be careful on this particular hike; halfway through, there is a *precipice* without any rails,” warned Alberto.  
 C. Instead of waiting to be caught, Sabrina took responsibility for her *precipice* and confessed to pulling the fire alarm.  
 D. Principal Grudzina soon announced the *precipice* of the student council election: Jason had won by a mere three votes.
- 11) A. Christopher’s mother was furious that her son had so *impetuously* decided to go skydiving that day.  
 B. The antique collector could hardly believe how *impetuous* the Egyptian artifact remained in spite of its years buried underground.  
 C. Despite the disastrous tornado, most of the Ferguson’s farmhouse remained *impetuous*.  
 D. Jennie regretted her *impetuous* agreement to repaint the house; she should have considered the summer heat and humidity.
- 12) A. George often *deprecates* people who are not vegetarian, forgetting that he used to eat meat, too.  
 B. As fewer people demanded electric toothbrushes, product prices began to *deprecate*.  
 C. After he failed the third chemistry test in a row, Hunter could not help but *deprecate* himself.  
 D. Malia feared that increasing the number of required hours of volunteering would *deprecate* the turnout.

**Lesson 1 continued:**

**Synonyms and Antonyms**

Match the word with its *antonym*.

- |                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 1) impel        | A. dissuade |
| 2) antagonistic | B. civil    |
| 3) curt         | C. cautious |
| 4) deprecate    | D. friendly |
| 5) impetuous    | E. commend  |

Match the word with its *synonym*.

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| 6) sentiment  | F. interrupt  |
| 7) impulse    | G. understand |
| 8) faculty    | H. compulsion |
| 9) fathom     | I. cliff      |
| 10) concoct   | J. feeling    |
| 11) obtrude   | K. ability    |
| 12) precipice | L. devise     |

End  
of  
Lesson 1