

# 1

## Vocabulary in Context

If you were asked to define the words *ambivalent*, *adverse*, and *incessant*, you might have some difficulty. On the other hand, if you saw these words in sentences, chances are you could come up with fairly accurate definitions. For example, see if you can define the words in *italics* in the three sentences below. Then, using a capital letter, write the letter of your choice on the answer line.

Do not use a dictionary for this work. Instead, in each sentence, try the word you think is the answer. For example, put *mixed* or *critical* or *approving* into the sentence in place of *ambivalent* to see which one makes the best sense.

\_\_\_ Many of us have *ambivalent* (ăm-bĭv'ə-lənt) feelings about our politicians, admiring but also distrusting them.

*Ambivalent* means

- A. mixed.                      B. critical.                      C. approving.

\_\_\_ The *adverse* (ăd-vûrs') effects of this drug, including dizziness, nausea, and headaches, have caused it to be withdrawn from the market.

*Adverse* means

- A. artificial.                      B. energetic.                      C. harmful.

\_\_\_ I prefer the occasional disturbance of ear-splitting thunder to the *incessant* (ĭn-sĕs'ənt) dripping of our kitchen sink.

*Incessant* means

- A. harmless.                      B. exciting.                      C. nonstop.

In each sentence above, the **context**—the words surrounding the unfamiliar word—provides clues to the word's meaning. You may have guessed from the context that *ambivalent* means “mixed,” that *adverse* means “harmful,” and that *incessant* is “nonstop.”

Using context clues to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words will help you in several ways:

- It will save you time when reading. You will not have to stop to look up words in the dictionary. (Of course, you won't always be able to understand a word from its context, so you should always have a dictionary nearby as you read.)
- After you figure out the meaning of the same word more than once through its context, it may become a part of your working vocabulary. You will therefore add to your vocabulary simply by reading thoughtfully.
- You will get a good sense of how a word is actually used, including any shades of meaning it might have.

## Types of Context Clues

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There are four common types of context clues:

- 1 Examples
- 2 Synonyms
- 3 Antonyms
- 4 General Sense of the Sentence or Passage

In the following sections, you will read about and practice using each type. The practices will sharpen your skills in recognizing and using context clues. They will also help you add new words to your vocabulary.

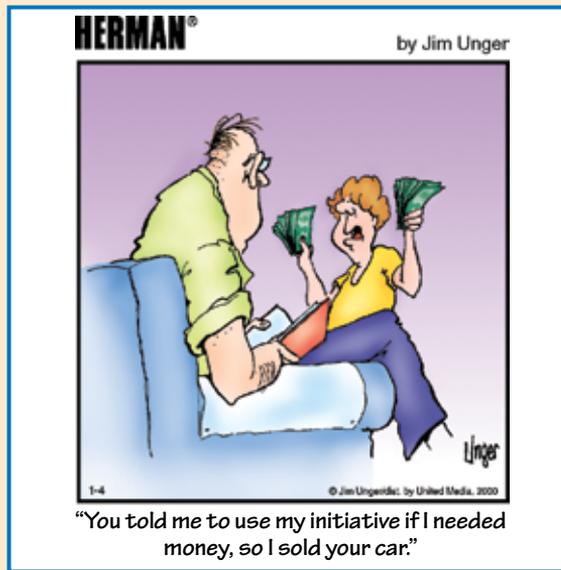
Remember not to use a dictionary for these practices. Their purpose is to help you develop the skill of figuring out what words mean without using a dictionary. Pronunciations are provided in parentheses for the words, and a brief guide to pronunciation is on pages 595–596.

### 1 Examples

Examples may suggest the meaning of an unknown word. To understand how this type of clue works, look again at the sentence on page 21: “The *adverse* effects of this drug, including dizziness, nausea, and headaches, have caused it to be withdrawn from the market.” The examples—dizziness, nausea, and headaches—helped you figure out that the word *adverse* means “harmful.”

Look also at the cartoon on the next page. What do you think the word *initiative* (i-nīsh'ə-tīv') means?

- A. anger                      B. willpower                      C. ability to take charge



Note that the example of the wife’s using initiative—going out and selling her husband’s car—helps you understand that *initiative* means “ability to take charge.”



### Check Your Understanding

Now read the items that follow. An *italicized* word in each sentence is followed by examples that serve as context clues for that word. These examples, which are **boldfaced**, will help you figure out the meaning of each word. On each line, write the letter of the answer you think is correct. Then read the explanation that follows.

Note that examples are often introduced with signal words and phrases like *for example*, *for instance*, *including*, and *such as*.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. *Nocturnal* creatures, such as **bats and owls**, have highly developed senses that enable them to function in the dark.

*Nocturnal* (nŏk-tŭr'nəl) means

- A. feathery.                      B. living.                      C. active at night.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. *Mundane* activities such as **doing the laundry or dishes** or **going food shopping** or **reading the newspaper** all help me relax.

*Mundane* (mŭn-dān') means

- A. exciting.                      B. painful.                      C. ordinary.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Instances of common *euphemisms* include **“final resting place”** (for *grave*), **“intoxicated”** (for *drunk*), and **“restroom”** (for *toilet*).

*Euphemisms* (yŭō'fə-mĭz'əmz) means

- A. unpleasant reactions.                      B. answers.                      C. substitutes for offensive terms.

### Explanation

In each sentence, the examples probably helped you to figure out the meanings of the words in italics:

- In sentence 1, the examples given of nocturnal creatures—bats and owls—may have helped you to guess that nocturnal creatures are those that are “active at night,” since bats and owls do come out at night.
- In sentence 2, the activities referred to are clues to the meaning of *mundane*, which is “ordinary.”
- In sentence 3, as the examples indicate, *euphemisms* means “substitutes for offensive terms.”



### PRACTICE 1: Examples

For each item below, underline the examples that suggest the meaning of the italicized term. Then write the letter of the meaning of that term on the answer line. Note that the last five sentences have been taken from college textbooks.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Today I had to deal with one *mishap* after another. I couldn't find my car keys, I dropped a bowl of soup at lunchtime, and my computer crashed twice.

*Mishap* (mĭs'hăp') means

- A. unlucky accident.                      B. event.                      C. unexpected question.

**Hint:** For this and all the exercises in this chapter, actually insert into the sentence the word you think is the answer. For example, substitute *unlucky accident* or *event* or *unexpected question* in the sentence in place of *mishap* to see which one fits.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Some mentally ill people have *bizarre* ideas. For instance, they may think the TV is talking to them or that others can steal their thoughts.

*Bizarre* (bĭ-zăr') means

- A. limited.                      B. ordinary.                      C. odd.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Some animals have remarkable *longevity*. For example, the giant land tortoise can live several hundred years.  
*Longevity* (lǒn-jěv'ĭ-tē) means  
 A. appearances.            B. length of life.            C. habits.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Before the invention of television, people spent more time on *diversions* such as going to town concerts and ball games, visiting neighborhood friends, and playing board games.  
*Diversions* (dĭ-vûr'zhənz) means  
 A. amusements.            B. differences.            C. chores.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Since my grandfather retired, he has developed several new *avocations*. For instance, he now enjoys gardening and chat groups on the Internet.  
*Avocations* (äv'ō-kā'shənz) means  
 A. hobbies.            B. vacations.            C. jobs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Children who move to a foreign country *adapt* much more easily than their parents, soon picking up the language and customs of their new home.  
*Adapt* (ə-dăpt') means  
 A. adjust.            B. struggle.            C. become bored.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The Chinese government provides *incentives* for married couples to have only one child. For example, couples with one child get financial help and free medical care.  
*Incentives* (ĭn-sĕn'tĭvz) means  
 A. warnings.            B. penalties.            C. encouragements.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Changes in such abilities as learning, reasoning, thinking, and language are aspects of *cognitive* development.  
*Cognitive* (kög'nĭ-tĭv) means  
 A. physical.            B. mental.            C. spiritual.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Today was a day of *turmoil* at work. The phones were constantly ringing, people were running back and forth, and several offices were being painted.  
*Turmoil* (tûr'moil') means  
 A. discussion.            B. confusion.            C. harmony.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. *White-collar crime*—for example, accepting a bribe from a customer or stealing from an employer—is more costly than “common” crime.  
*White-collar crime* (hwĭt-kōl'ər krĭm) means crime committed by  
 A. gang members.            B. strangers.            C. people in the workplace.

## 2 Synonyms

A context clue is often available in the form of a **synonym**: a word that means the same or almost the same as the unknown word. A synonym may appear anywhere in a passage to provide the same meaning as the unknown word.

Look at the cartoon below.



Notice that the synonym that helps you understand the word *terminate* is “end.”



### Check Your Understanding

In each of the following items, the word to be defined is italicized. Underline the synonym for the italicized word in each sentence.

1. Fresh garlic may not *enhance* (ĕn-hăns') the breath, but it certainly does improve spaghetti sauce.
2. As soon as I made a *flippant* (flĭp'ənt) remark to my boss, I regretted sounding so disrespectful.
3. Although the salesperson tried to *assuage* (ə-swāj') the angry customer, there was no way to soothe her.

### Explanation

In each sentence, the synonym given should have helped you understand the meaning of the word in italics:

- *Enhance* means “improve.”
- *Flippant* means “disrespectful.”
- *Assuage* means “soothe.”



## PRACTICE 2: Synonyms

Each item below includes a word that is a synonym of the italicized word. Write the synonym of the italicized word in the space provided. Note that the last five sentences have been taken from college textbooks.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Speaking in front of a group *disconcerts* (dɪs'kən-sürtz') Alan. Even answering a question in class embarrasses him.  
*Hint: How does Alan react when he has to speak in public?*
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Because my friends had advised me to *scrutinize* (skrūt'n-īz') the lease, I took time to examine all the fine print.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The presidential candidate vowed to discuss *pragmatic* (præg-măt'ik) solutions. He said the American people want practical answers, not empty theory.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I asked the instructor to explain a confusing passage in the textbook. She said, "I wish I could, but it's *obscure* (öb-skyör') to me, too."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Teachers may overlook it when a student is two minutes late. But they are not going to *condone* (kən-dön') someone's walking into class a half hour late.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. When people are broke, they find that many things which seem *indispensable* (ĩn'dĩ-spěn'sə-bəl) are not so necessary after all.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Managers should beware of having *adversaries* (äd'vær-sěr'ēz) work together; opponents often do not cooperate well.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. In the same way that the arrival of mechanical equipment meant fewer farm jobs, the *advent* (äd'vent') of the computer has led to fewer manufacturing jobs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Many corporations like to be seen as *benevolent* (bə-něv'ə-lənt) and will actively seek publicity for their charitable donations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Throughout history, the *prevalent* (prěv'ə-lənt) authority pattern in families has been patriarchy, in which males are in control. In only a few societies has matriarchy been the customary authority pattern.

### 3 Antonyms

An **antonym**—a word that means the opposite of another word—is also a useful context clue. Antonyms are often signaled by words and phrases such as *however*, *but*, *yet*, *on the other hand*, and *in contrast*.

Look again at the sentence on page 21: “I prefer the occasional disturbance of ear-splitting thunder to the *incessant* dripping of our kitchen sink.” Here the word *occasional* is an antonym that helps us realize that the word *incessant* means “nonstop.”

Look also at the cartoon below.



Note that the antonym *lowers* help you figure out that *amplifies* must mean “increases.”



#### Check Your Understanding

In each sentence below, underline the word that means the opposite of the italicized word. Then, on the answer line, write the letter of the meaning of the italicized word.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Many people have pointed out the harmful effects that a working mother may have on the family, yet there are many *salutary* effects as well.

*Salutary* (säl'yə-tēr'ē) means

- A. well-known.                      B. beneficial.                      C. hurtful.

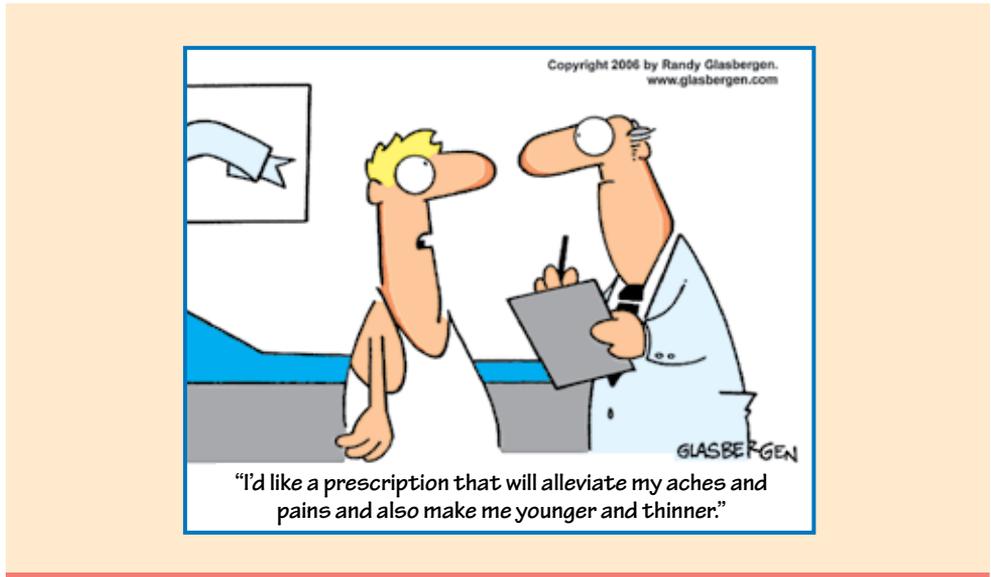


- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. While Melba's apartment is decorated plainly, her clothing is very *flamboyant*.  
*Flamboyant* (flām-boi'ənt) means  
A. inexpensive.            B. flashy.            C. washable.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. To keep healthy, older people need to stay active. Remaining *stagnant* results in loss of strength and health.  
*Stagnant* (stäg'nənt) means  
A. inactive.            B. lively.            C. unhealthy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. In formal communication, be sure to avoid *ambiguous* language. Clear language prevents confusion.  
*Ambiguous* (ām-bīg'yōō-əs) means  
A. wordy.            B. ineffective.            C. unclear.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Being raised with conflicting values can be a *detriment* to boys' and girls' relationships with each other. In contrast, shared values can be a benefit.  
*Detriment* (dět'rə-mənt) means  
A. improvement.            B. drawback.            C. relationship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. While houses and antiques often increase in value, most things, such as cars and TVs, *depreciate*.  
*Depreciate* (dī-prē'shē-āt') means  
A. remain useful.            B. lose value.            C. break.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Reliable scientific theories are based not upon careless work, but rather upon *meticulous* research and experimentation.  
*Meticulous* (mī-tīk'yə-ləs) means  
A. hasty.            B. expensive.            C. careful.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. In the early days of automobile manufacturing, *stringent* laws controlled motorists' speed. In contrast, the laws designed to protect consumers from faulty products were extremely weak.  
*Stringent* (strīn'jənt) means  
A. informal.            B. not effective.            C. strict.

## 4 General Sense of the Sentence or Passage

Sometimes it takes a bit more detective work to puzzle out the meaning of an unfamiliar word. In such cases, you must draw conclusions based on the information given with the word. Asking yourself questions about the passage may help you make a fairly accurate guess about the meaning of the unfamiliar word.

Look at the cartoon below.



To figure out the meaning of *alleviate*, try asking this question: What would the patient want the prescription to do to his aches and pains? The patient's words to his doctor strongly suggest that *alleviate* means "lessen."



### Check Your Understanding

Each of the sentences below is followed by a question. Think about each question; then, on the answer line, write the letter of the answer you think is the correct meaning of the italicized word.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. A former employee, *irate* over having been fired, broke into the plant and deliberately wrecked several machines.

(What would be the employee's state of mind?)

*Irate* (ī-rāt') means

- A. relieved.                      B. very angry.                      C. undecided.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Despite the *proximity* of Ron’s house to his sister’s, he rarely sees her.

(What about Ron’s house would make it surprising that he didn’t see his sister more often?)

*Proximity* (prŏk-sĭm’ĭ-tē) means

- A. similarity.                      B. nearness.                      C. superiority.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. The car wash we organized to raise funds was a *fiasco*—it rained all day.

(How successful would a car wash be on a rainy day?)

*Fiasco* (fē-ās’kō) means

- A. great financial success.                      B. welcome surprise.                      C. complete disaster.

### Explanation

The first sentence provides enough evidence for you to guess that *irate* means “very angry.” *Proximity* in the second sentence means “nearness.” And a *fiasco* is a “complete disaster.” (You may not hit on the exact dictionary definition of a word by using context clues, but you will often be accurate enough to make good sense of what you are reading.)



### PRACTICE 4: General Sense of the Sentence or Passage

Try to answer the question that follows each item below. Then use the logic of each answer to help you write the letter of the meaning you think is correct. Note that the last five sentences have been taken from college textbooks.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. The lizard was so *lethargic* that I wasn’t sure if it was alive or dead. It didn’t even blink.

(Would an animal that seemed dead be green, inactive, or big?)

*Lethargic* (lə-thär’jĭk) means

- A. green.                      B. inactive.                      C. big.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Jamal didn’t want to tell Tina the entire plot of the movie, so he just gave her the *gist* of the story.

(What kind of information would Jamal have given Tina?)

*Gist* (jĭst) means

- A. ending.                      B. title.                      C. main idea.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Ten years of research *culminated* in a report explaining the mysterious behavior of the praying mantis, a large green or brownish insect.

(What would be the relationship of the report to the research?)

*Culminated* (kŭl'mə-nā'tīd) means

- A. failed.                      B. began.                      C. concluded.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Despite complaints from parents, educators, and government officials, violence and sex on television seem to go on *unabated*.

(In spite of the complaints, does anything happen?)

*Unabated* (ŭn'ə-bā'tīd) means

- A. more slowly.                      B. unstopped.                      C. at great expense.

## An Important Point about Textbook Definitions

You don't always have to use context clues or the dictionary to find definitions. Very often, textbook authors define important terms. Also, after giving a definition, authors usually follow it with one or more examples to ensure that you understand the new term. For instance, here is a short textbook passage that includes a definition and an example:

<sup>1</sup>People do not always satisfy their needs directly; sometimes they use a substitute object. <sup>2</sup>Use of a substitute is known as **displacement**. <sup>3</sup>This is the process that takes place, for instance, when you control your impulse to yell at your boss and then go home and yell at the first member of your family who is unlucky enough to cross your path.

Textbook authors, then, often do more than provide context clues: they define a word, set it off in *italic* or **boldface** type, and provide examples as well. When they take the time to define and illustrate a word, you should assume that the term is important enough to learn.

More about textbook definitions and examples appears on pages 224–225 in the “Relationships II” chapter.

## CHAPTER REVIEW

In this chapter, you learned the following:

- To save time when reading, you should try to figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words. You can do so by looking at their *context*—the words surrounding them.
- There are four kinds of context clues: **examples** (marked by words like *for example*, *for instance*, *including*, and *such as*); **synonyms** (words that mean the same as unknown words); **antonyms** (words that mean the opposite of unknown words); and **general sense of the sentence** (clues in the sentence or surrounding sentences about what words might mean).
- Textbook authors typically set off important words in *italic* or **boldface** and define those words for you, often providing examples as well.

The next chapter—Chapter 2—will introduce you to the most important of all comprehension skills, finding the main idea.



**On the Web:** If you are using this book in class, you can visit our website for additional practice in understanding vocabulary in context. Go to [www.townsendpress.com](http://www.townsendpress.com) and click on “Online Exercises.”



## REVIEW TEST 1

To review what you've learned in this chapter, answer the following questions by filling in the blank or writing the letter of the correct answer.

1. Often, a reader can figure out the meaning of a new word without using the dictionary—by paying attention to the word's \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. In the sentence below, which type of context clue is used for the italicized word?  
A. example                      B. synonym                      C. antonym  
You can't take certain courses unless you've taken a *prerequisite* (prĕ-rĕk'wĭ-zĭt); for instance, you can't take Spanish Literature I unless you've taken Spanish III.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. In the sentence below, which type of context clue is used for the italicized word?  
A. example                      B. synonym                      C. antonym  
There are thick pine forests at the foot of the mountain, but higher up, the trees become *sparse* (spärs).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. In the sentences below, which type of context clue is used for the italicized word?  
A. example                      B. synonym                      C. antonym  
Talent may take years to surface. When Beethoven was a young child, his great *aptitude* (ăp'tĭ-tōod') in music was not at all apparent to his teachers.
5. Often when textbook authors introduce a new word, they provide you with a \_\_\_\_\_ and follow it with \_\_\_\_\_ that help make the meaning of the word clear.



## REVIEW TEST 2

A. Look at the cartoon below, and then answer the questions which follow.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Using the context clues in the cartoon, write the letter of the best meaning of *curtail* (kər-tāl') in the space provided.
- A. improve                      B. reduce                      C. supplement
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. What kind of context clue helps you understand the meaning of the cartoon?
- A. Examples clue              B. Synonym clue              C. Antonym clue
- B.** Using context clues for help, write the letter of the best meaning for each italicized word. Use the space provided.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. *Nepotism* (nĕp'ə-tīz'əm) is commonplace where I work: the boss's daughter is vice-president of the company, her husband runs the order department, and their son has just started working in the warehouse.
- A. good managerial practice              C. arguments among employees  
B. favoritism to relatives                  D. confusion among management
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Because the professor's explanation was *nebulous* (nĕb'yə-ləs), several of the students asked him to make himself clear.
- A. vague    C. fascinating  
B. boring    D. brief

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The bank robber was apparently *nondescript* (nɒn'di-skript')—none of the witnesses could think of any special characteristics that might identify him.
- A. poorly disguised                      C. memorable  
B. lacking distinctive qualities        D. cruel

- C. Using context clues for help, write the definition for each italicized word. Then write the letter of the definition in the space provided. Choose from the definitions in the box below. Each definition will be used once.

A. discouraged  
D. overjoyed

B. doubtful  
E. provided

C. nag

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I would not just be glad if I won the lottery; I'd be *ecstatic*.  
*Ecstatic* (ɛk-stæt'ɪk) means \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Nature has *endowed* hummingbirds with the ability to fly backward.  
*Endowed* (ɛn-doud') means \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Opponents of the death penalty say it has never actually *deterred* anyone from committing murder.  
*Deterred* (dɪ-tɜrd') means \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Around the age of two or three, small children like to *badger* their parents with endless questions beginning with the word "why."  
*Badger* (bædʒər) means \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. While four-year-old Mattie claimed she was going to stay up until midnight on New Year's Eve, her parents were *dubious* of her ability to remain awake that late.  
*Dubious* (dʊə'bɛ-əs) means \_\_\_\_\_.



### REVIEW TEST 3

**A.** Use context clues to figure out the meaning of the italicized word in each of the following sentences, and write your definition in the space provided.

1. While it's often not *feasible* to work full-time while going to school, it may be practical to hold down a part-time job.

*Feasible* (fē'zə-bəl) means \_\_\_\_\_

2. It's amazing that my neighbors always appear *immaculate*, yet their apartment is often quite dirty.

*Immaculate* (ĩ-măk'yə-līt) means \_\_\_\_\_.

3. It's against the law to ask people to *divulge* their ages at job interviews.

*Divulge* (dĩ-vŭlj') means \_\_\_\_\_.

4. Doctors should *alleviate* the pain of terminally ill patients so that their final days are as comfortable as possible.

*Alleviate* (ə-lē'vĕ-āt') means \_\_\_\_\_.

5. When rain and sunshine are *simultaneous*, the rain is often described as a sun shower.

*Simultaneous* (sĩ'məl-tā'nĕ-əs) means \_\_\_\_\_.

**B.** Use context clues to figure out the meanings of the italicized words in the following textbook passages. Write your definitions in the spaces provided.

<sup>1</sup>Although mysteries and science fiction may seem like very different kinds of writing, the two forms share some basic similarities. <sup>2</sup>First of all, both are action-directed, emphasizing plot at the expense of character development. <sup>3</sup>Possibly for this reason, both types of literature have been *scorned* by critics as being merely "entertainment" rather than "literature." <sup>4</sup>But this attack is unjustified, for both mysteries and science fiction share a concern with moral issues. <sup>5</sup>Science fiction often raises the question of whether or not scientific advances are of benefit to humanity. <sup>6</sup>And a mystery story rarely ends without the *culpable* person being brought to justice.

6. *Scorned* (skôrnd) means \_\_\_\_\_.

7. *Culpable* (kŭl'pə-bəl) means \_\_\_\_\_.

<sup>1</sup>Why did people begin to live in cities? <sup>2</sup>To answer this question, we must start by looking back some ten thousand years ago. <sup>3</sup>In certain parts of the world (probably those where the natural food supply was fairly unreliable), people *endeavored* to tame nature for their own purposes. <sup>4</sup>They began weeding and watering groups of edible plants, adding organic matter to help fertilize the soil, and saving the seeds from the strongest, most desirable plants to sow the next spring. <sup>5</sup>At the same time, they began protecting herds of small wild animals that were often hunted by larger animals. <sup>6</sup>They would move them to more plentiful pastures during the dry months of summer. <sup>7</sup>During the harshest periods of winter, they would *supplement* whatever fresh food was available with stored food. <sup>8</sup>These changes, *coupled* with a few simple techniques for storing grain and meat, enabled people to abandon a wandering lifestyle in favor of settlement in small villages. <sup>9</sup>These villages were the basic form of human social organization for the next several thousand years.

8. *Endeavored* (ĕn-dĕv'ərĕd) means \_\_\_\_\_ .

9. *Supplement* (sŭp'lə-mĕnt) means \_\_\_\_\_ .

10. *Coupled* (kŭp'əld) means \_\_\_\_\_ .



#### REVIEW TEST 4

Here is a chance to apply the skill of understanding vocabulary in context to a full-length selection. Read the story below, a version of which appeared in *Reader's Digest*, and then answer the questions that follow.

#### Words to Watch

Below are some words in the reading that do not have strong context support. Each word is followed by the number of the paragraph in which it appears and its meaning there. These words are indicated in the article by a small circle (°).

*smudged* (2): dirty with streaks or stains

*boondocks* (3): a rural region

*maneuvers* (3): military exercises

## NIGHT WATCH

Roy Popkin



- 1 The story began on a downtown Brooklyn street corner. An elderly man had collapsed while crossing the street, and an ambulance rushed him to Kings County Hospital. There, during his few returns to consciousness, the man repeatedly called for his son.
- 2 From a smudged<sup>o</sup>, often-read letter, an emergency-room nurse learned that the son was a Marine stationed in North Carolina. Apparently, there were no other relatives.
- 3 Someone at the hospital called the Red Cross office in Brooklyn, and a request for the boy to rush to Brooklyn was relayed to the Red Cross director of the North Carolina Marine Corps camp. Because time was short—the patient was dying—the Red Cross man and an officer set out in a jeep. They located the sought-after young man wading through marshy boondocks<sup>o</sup> on maneuvers<sup>o</sup>. He was rushed to the airport in time to

catch the one plane that might enable him to reach his dying father.

It was mid-evening when the young Marine walked into the entrance lobby of Kings County Hospital. A nurse took the tired, anxious serviceman to the bedside.

“Your son is here,” she said to the old man. She had to repeat the words several times before the patient’s eyes opened. Heavily sedated because of the pain of his heart attack, he dimly saw the young man in the Marine Corps uniform standing outside the oxygen tent. He reached out his hand. The Marine wrapped his toughened fingers around the old man’s limp ones, squeezing a message of love and encouragement. The nurse brought a chair, so the Marine could sit alongside the bed.

Nights are long in hospitals, but all through the night the young Marine sat there in the poorly lighted ward, holding the old man’s hand and offering words of hope and strength. Occasionally, the nurse suggested that the Marine move away and rest a while. He refused.

Whenever the nurse came into the ward, the Marine was there. His full attention was on the dying man, and he was oblivious of her and of the night noises of the hospital—the clanking of an oxygen tank, the laughter of night-staff members exchanging greetings, the cries and moans and snores of other

patients. Now and then she heard him say a few gentle words. The dying man said nothing, only held tightly to his son through most of the night.

8 Along toward dawn, the patient died. The Marine placed on the bed the lifeless hand he had been holding, and went to tell the nurse. While she did what she had to do, he relaxed—for the first time since he got to the hospital.

9 Finally, she returned to the nurse's station, where he was waiting. She started to offer words of condolence for his loss, but the Marine interrupted her. "Who was that man?" he asked.

10 "He was your father," she answered, startled.

11 "No, he wasn't," the Marine replied. "I never saw him before in my life."

12 "Why didn't you say something when I took you to him?" the nurse asked.

"I knew right off there'd been a mistake, but I also knew he needed his son, and his son just wasn't here. When I realized he was too sick to tell whether or not I was his son, I figured he really needed me. So I stayed."

13  
14 With that, the Marine turned and left the hospital. Two days later a routine message came in from the North Carolina Marine Corps base informing the Brooklyn Red Cross that the real son was on his way to Brooklyn for his father's funeral. It turned out there had been two Marines with the same name and similar serial numbers in the camp. Someone in the personnel office had pulled out the wrong record.

15 But the wrong Marine had become the right son at the right time. And he proved, in a uniquely human way, that there are people who care what happens to their fellow human beings.

## Vocabulary Questions

Use context clues to help you decide on the best definition for each italicized word. Then, on the answer line, write the letter of each choice.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. In the sentence below, the word *relayed* (rē'lād) means
- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| A. hidden.       | C. made a gift. |
| B. passed along. | D. ignored.     |

"Someone at the hospital called the Red Cross office in Brooklyn, and a request for the boy to rush to Brooklyn was relayed to the Red Cross director of the North Carolina Marine Corps camp." (Paragraph 3)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. In the sentence below, the words *enable him* (ě-nā'bəl hĭm) mean
- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| A. stop him.      | C. know him.      |
| B. encourage him. | D. make him able. |

"He was rushed to the airport in time to catch the one plane that might enable him to reach his dying father." (Paragraph 3)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. In the excerpt below, the word *sedated* (sĭ-dāt'ĭd) means
- |                   |                                  |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. spoken loudly. | C. armed.                        |
| B. wide awake.    | D. drugged with a pain reliever. |
- “Your son is here,’ she said to the old man. She had to repeat the words several times before the patient’s eyes opened. Heavily sedated because of the pain of his heart attack, he dimly saw the young man ...” (Paragraph 5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. In the excerpt below, the word *dimly* (ďĭm'ĭlĕ) means
- |               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| A. clearly.   | C. rarely. |
| B. unclearly. | D. often.  |
- “She had to repeat the words several times before the patient’s eyes opened. Heavily sedated because of the pain of his heart attack, he dimly saw the young man ...” (Paragraph 5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. In the sentence below, the word *limp* (lĭmp) means
- |                                   |              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| A. lacking firmness and strength. | C. long.     |
| B. equally tough.                 | D. bleeding. |
- “The Marine wrapped his toughened fingers around the old man’s limp ones, squeezing a message of love and encouragement.” (Paragraph 5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. A clue to the meaning of *limp* in the sentence above is the antonym
- |               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| A. toughened. | C. message. |
| B. old.       | D. love.    |
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. In the excerpt below, the word *oblivious* (ə-blĭv'ĕ-əs) means
- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| A. mindful.  | C. unaware.  |
| B. bothered. | D. informed. |
- “Whenever the nurse came into the ward, the Marine was there. His full attention was on the dying man, and he was oblivious of her and of the night noises of the hospital ...” (Paragraph 7)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. In the excerpt below, the word *condolence* (kən-dō'ləns) means
- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| A. excuse.     | C. surprise. |
| B. bitterness. | D. sympathy. |
- “She started to offer words of condolence for his loss ...” (Paragraph 9)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. In the excerpt below, the word *startled* (stär'tĭld) means
- |                     |               |
|---------------------|---------------|
| A. very pleased.    | C. angry.     |
| B. with admiration. | D. surprised. |
- “Who was that man?’ he asked. ‘He was your father,’ she answered, startled.” (Paragraphs 9–10)

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. In the sentence below, the words *uniquely human* (yōō-nēk'lē hyōō'mən) mean

- A. impossible for humans.                      C. done only by humans.  
 B. scary to humans.                              D. sudden by human standards.

“And he proved, in a uniquely human way, that there are people who care what happens to their fellow human beings.” (Paragraph 15)

## Discussion Questions

1. When do you think the Marine realized that calling him to the hospital was a mistake? Was it when he first saw the old man or before? What parts of the reading support your conclusion?
2. How do you think the dead man’s real son felt about the other Marine being with his dying father? How would you feel?
3. The incident in the reading took place because of some surprising coincidences. What were they? Has a surprising or interesting coincidence ever taken place in your life? If so, what was it, and how did it affect you?
4. By going out of his way for a stranger, the Marine showed “in a uniquely human way that there are people who care what happens to others.” Have you ever gone out of your way to help a stranger? Or have you seen someone else do so? Tell what the situation was and what happened.

*Note:* Writing assignments for this selection appear on page 599.

### Check Your Performance

### VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Number Right</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Score</i>
Review Test 1 (5 items)	_____	× 2 =	_____
Review Test 2 (10 items)	_____	× 3 =	_____
Review Test 3 (10 items)	_____	× 3 =	_____
Review Test 4 (10 items)	_____	× 3 =	_____
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>			= _____ %

Enter your total score into the **Reading Performance Chart: Review Tests** on the inside back cover.

## VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT: Mastery Test 1

A. Look at the cartoon below, and then answer the question that follows.



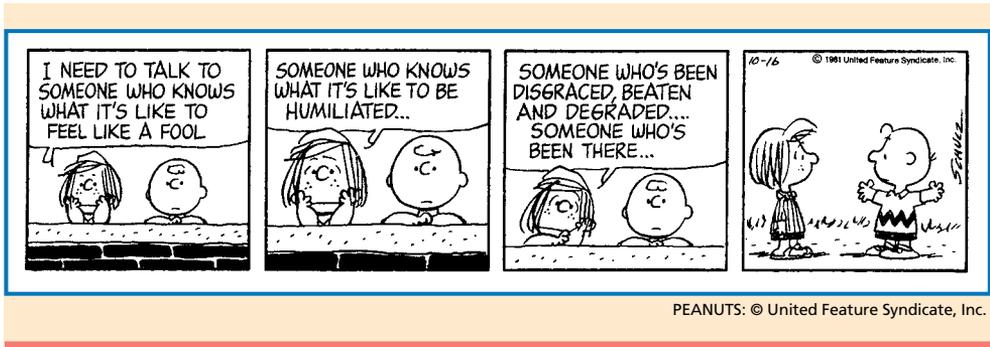
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Using the context clues in the cartoon, write the letter of the meaning of *gullibility* (gŭl'lə-bĭl'ĭ-tē) in the space provided.
- state of being easily fooled
  - assertiveness
  - irritability
- B. For each item below, underline the **examples** that suggest the meaning of the italicized word. Then, on the answer line, write the letter of the meaning of that word.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. When I finally get around to cleaning out my refrigerator, I always find something *vile* (vĭl) at the back of a shelf, such as moldy fruit or old smelly beans.
- tempting
  - recent
  - false
  - disgusting
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The Easter egg hunt featured *cryptic* (krĭp'tĭk) clues such as, "You'll find a prize somewhere narrow" and "Look for the pink."
- rhyiming
  - puzzling
  - clear
  - overused

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**VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT: Mastery Test 2**

**A.** Look at the cartoon below, and then answer the question that follows.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Using the context clues in the cartoon, write the letter of the meaning of *degraded* (dĭ-grād'ĭd) in the space provided.
- treated with disrespect
  - treated with care
  - treated with fear
- B.** For each item below, underline the **examples** that suggest the meaning of the italicized word. Then, on the answer line, write the letter of the meaning of that word.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Every *habitat* (hăb'ĭ-tăt') in the world, from volcano tops to icebergs, can support some sort of life.
- country
  - environment
  - food source
  - practice
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Common *redundant* (rĭ-dŭn'dənt) phrases include “cooperate together” (instead of simply “cooperate”) and “postponed until later” (instead of “postponed”).
- repetitious
  - descriptive
  - difficult
  - useful
- C.** Each textbook item below includes a word that is a **synonym** of the italicized word. Write the synonym of the italicized word in the space provided.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The Amish people prefer *austere* (ô-stĭr') styles—their clothing and homes are plain.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Airport security guards must observe people's *demeanor* (dĭ-mē'nər) in order to notice any suspicious conduct.

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**VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT: Mastery Test 3**

Using context clues for help, write, in the space provided, the letter of the best meaning for each italicized word.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. It's a good idea for married couples to discuss their plans in case of each other's *demise* (dĭ-mīz'). For example, do they wish to be buried or cremated?  
A. death  
B. success  
C. desire to divorce  
D. concern
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The press *assailed* (ə-sāld') the mayor for giving large city construction jobs to his brother-in-law's firm.  
A. searched for  
B. paid  
C. attacked  
D. fined
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. One *tenet* (tĕn'ĭt) of Islam is that its followers should not drink alcohol.  
A. answer  
B. prediction  
C. teaching  
D. guarantee
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Toddlers are naturally *inquisitive* (ĭn-kwĭz'ĭ-tĭv). Because they are so interested in their surroundings, they are eager to explore everything.  
A. unreliable  
B. clumsy  
C. curious  
D. tired
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. After x-rays were discovered in 1895, there were some *preposterous* (prĭ-pōs'tər-əs) reactions. For example, London merchants sold x-ray-proof underwear.  
A. logical  
B. ridiculous  
C. dangerous  
D. delayed
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The foolish defendant *waived* (wāvd) his right to an attorney and instead spoke for himself in court.  
A. depended upon  
B. greeted  
C. wrote  
D. gave up
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Sexual standards in England during the 1800s were so strict that it was

(Continues on next page)

considered *sordid* (sôr' dĭd) for women to reveal their legs in public.

- A. proper
- B. impossible
- C. popular
- D. indecent

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. Young children believe their parents are perfect, until they become teenagers, when their parents suddenly become quite *fallible* (fāl' ə-bəl).

- A. unhealthy
- B. dangerous
- C. imperfect
- D. skilled

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. America has often been called a “melting pot” into which people of many different cultures *assimilate* (ə-sĭm' ə-lāt').

- A. learn
- B. leave
- C. avoid each other
- D. blend

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. The Englishman John Merrick's illness gave him such a *grotesque* (grō-tĕsk') appearance that he was called “the Elephant Man.” Despite people's reactions to his abnormally large head and twisted body, Merrick remained affectionate and gentle.

- A. strong
- B. deformed
- C. gray
- D. childlike

**VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT: Mastery Test 4**

Using context clues for help, write, in the space provided, the letter of the best meaning for each italicized word or words. Note that all of the sentences have been taken from college textbooks.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. After the Civil War, trolleys and streetcars greatly expanded workers' *mobility* (mō-bīl'ĭ-tē), permitting them to move beyond walking distance from factories.
- A. pay  
B. skills  
C. ability to move  
D. interests
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. What people say may not reflect accurately what they are actually feeling. It is sometimes necessary to *resort to* (rĭ-zôrt' tōō) clues other than their spoken words to understand them fully.
- A. remove from  
B. make light of  
C. make use of  
D. ignore
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Individual political organizations often join together to form *coalitions* (kō'ə-lĭsh' ənz) to increase the support for their issues.
- A. partnerships  
B. lines  
C. contests  
D. questions
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Surveys about people's sexual habits are often inaccurate because people may lie, and there is no way to *corroborate* (kə-rōb' ə-rāt') what they say.
- A. forget  
B. prove the truth of  
C. change  
D. recall
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Everyone at the party was shocked by how *blatantly* (blāt'nt-lē) the woman insulted her former boss. She refused to shake his hand, saying, "I don't want to get my hand dirty."
- A. secretly  
B. accidentally  
C. barely  
D. obviously
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Following the English principle that voters had to have a *stake* (stāk) in the community, the colonies generally required citizens to own a certain minimum amount of land in order to vote.
- A. job  
B. relative  
C. investment  
D. employee

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. William Henry Harrison's 1840 campaign brought many *innovations* (ɪn'ə-vā'shənz) to the art of electioneering. For example, for the first time, a presidential candidate spoke out on his own behalf.
- A. new things                      C. crimes  
B. people                              D. financial skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. To fully *assess* (ə-sēs') patients in order to place them in appropriate programs, mental health professionals need information on emotional adjustment and physical health.
- A. find                                  C. hide  
B. recognize                          D. evaluate
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. In the eating disorder known as bulimia nervosa, a person will go on huge eating binges and then will try to *nullify* (nʌl'ə-fī') the outrageous food intake by purposely vomiting or strictly dieting.
- A. increase                              C. forget  
B. undo                                      D. delay
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Adults who have both children of their own and elderly parents need to balance their commitments. They must look after their children and also *allocate* (ə-l'ə-kāt') time and energy to care for their parents.
- A. recall                                  C. set aside  
B. pay for                                  D. view

**VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT: Mastery Test 5**

**A.** Using context clues for help, write, in the space provided, the letter of the best meaning for each italicized word. Note that all of the sentences have been taken from college textbooks.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The possibility of developing a top seller is so *alluring* (ə-lōōr'ĭng) that American companies spend billions of dollars a year trying to create new products or improve old ones.  
A. dangerous                      C. attractive  
B. final                              D. unreasonable
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Using sign language, chimpanzees can *convey* (kən-vā') such ideas as "Candy sweet" and "Give me hug."  
A. reject                              C. think of  
B. accept                              D. communicate
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Smoking or chewing tobacco, wrote King James I, was "*loathsome* (lōth'səm) to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, and dangerous to the lungs."  
A. appealing                      C. disgusting  
B. hidden                              D. healthy
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The death of a spouse can cause *profound* (prə-found') depression that, in some cases, can even lead to the death of the partner.  
A. deep                              C. occasional  
B. accidental                      D. mild
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The healthiest type of parents are those who guide and instruct their children, but also grant them a degree of *autonomy* (ô-tōn'ə-mē), encouraging the children to make their own decisions and form their own opinions.  
A. financing                      C. independence  
B. knowledge                      D. guidance

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**B.** Use context clues to figure out the meaning of the italicized word in each of the following items. Then write your definition in the space provided.

6. A person giving first aid needs to make sure a body part that has been completely *severed* is sent to the hospital with the victim. Surgeons can often reattach the body part with microsurgery.

*Severed* (sĕv'ərĕd) means \_\_\_\_\_

7. Tabloid newspapers often *distort* the news by reporting rumors as if they were true.

*Distort* (dĭ-stōrt') means \_\_\_\_\_

8. It's not always necessary for adults to *intervene* in children's fights; sometimes it's best to let children handle quarrels themselves.

*Intervene* (ĭn'tər-vĕn') means \_\_\_\_\_

9. Many companies once had retirement policies that made it *mandatory* for people to quit working as soon as they turned a certain age.

*Mandatory* (măn' də-tôr'ĕ) means \_\_\_\_\_

10. After a heavy public relations campaign against the union, the hospital finally *relented* and allowed its workers to join.

*Relented* (rĭ-lĕnt'ĭd) means \_\_\_\_\_

## VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT: Mastery Test 6

- A.** Five words are italicized in the textbook passage below. Write the definition for each italicized word, choosing from the definitions in the box. Also, write the letter of the definition in the space provided.

Be sure to read the entire passage before making your choices. Note that five definitions will be left over.

- |              |                         |                    |            |
|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| A. causing   | B. deadly               | C. delay           | D. die     |
| E. enjoyable | F. forced to experience | G. give credit for | H. helpful |
| I. pay for   | J. reducing             |                    |            |

<sup>1</sup>In the early days of medicine, there were few drugs or treatments that gave any real physical benefit. <sup>2</sup>As a result, patients were treated in a variety of strange, largely ineffective ways. <sup>3</sup>For instance, Egyptian patients were medicated with “lizard’s blood, crocodile dung, the teeth of swine, the hoof of an ass, rotten meat, and fly specks.” <sup>4</sup>If the disease itself didn’t cause the patient to *succumb*, he or she had a good chance of dying instead from the treatment. <sup>5</sup>Medical treatments of the Middle Ages were somewhat less *lethal*, but not much more effective. <sup>6</sup>And as late as the eighteenth century, patients were *subjected to* bloodletting, freezing, and repeatedly induced vomiting to bring about a cure.

<sup>7</sup>Amazingly, people often seemed to get relief from such treatments. <sup>8</sup>Physicians have, for centuries, been objects of great respect, and this was no less true when few remedies were actually effective. <sup>9</sup>To what can one *attribute* the fair level of success that these treatments provided and the widespread faith in the effectiveness of physicians? <sup>10</sup>The most likely answer is that these are examples of the tremendous power of the placebo effect—“any medical procedure that produces an effect in a patient because of its therapeutic intent and not its specific nature, whether chemical or physical.” <sup>11</sup>Even today, the role of placebos in *curtailing* pain and discomfort is substantial. <sup>12</sup>Many patients who swallow useless substances or who undergo useless procedures find that, as a result, their symptoms disappear and their health improves.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. In sentence 4, *succumb* (sə-kŭm') means \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. In sentence 5, *lethal* (lē'thəl) means \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. In sentence 6, *subjected to* (səb-jĕk' tĭd tō) means \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. In sentence 9, *attribute* (ə-trĭb' yōōt) means \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. In sentence 11, *curtailing* (kər-tāl' ĭng) means \_\_\_\_\_.

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- B.** Five words are italicized in the textbook passage below. Write the definition for each italicized word, choosing from the definitions in the box. Then write the letter of the definition in the space provided.

Be sure to read the entire passage before making your choices. Note that five definitions will be left over.

- |                     |                 |                |              |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| A. colorful         | B. delayed      | C. disappeared | D. increased |
| E. most common      | F. passed       | G. pray        | H. punished  |
| I. stir up interest | J. uncontrolled |                |              |

<sup>1</sup>A century ago, the *prevailing* view among industrialists was that business had only one responsibility: to make a profit. <sup>2</sup>By and large those were not good times to be a low-level worker or an incautious consumer. <sup>3</sup>People worked sixty-hour weeks under harsh conditions for a dollar or two a day. <sup>4</sup>The few people who tried to fight the system faced violence and unemployment. <sup>5</sup>Consumers were not much better off. <sup>6</sup>If you bought a product, you paid the price and took the consequences. <sup>7</sup>There were no consumer groups or government agencies to come to your defense if the product was defective or caused harm. <sup>8</sup>If you tried to sue the company, chances were you would lose.

<sup>9</sup>These conditions caught the attention of a few crusading journalists and novelists known as muckrakers. <sup>10</sup>They used the power of the pen to create public anger and *agitate* for reform. <sup>11</sup>Largely through their efforts, a number of laws were passed to limit the power of monopolies and to establish safety standards for food and drugs.

<sup>12</sup>Despite these reforms, business continued to pursue profits above all else until the Great Depression. <sup>13</sup>When the economic system collapsed in 1929 and 25 percent of the work force was unemployed, people lost their faith in *unbridled* capitalism. <sup>14</sup>Pressure *mounted* for government to fix the system.

<sup>15</sup>At the urging of President Franklin Roosevelt, Congress voted in laws to protect workers, consumers, and investors. <sup>16</sup>The Social Security system was set up, employees were given the right to join unions and bargain collectively, the minimum wage was established, and the length of the workweek was limited. <sup>17</sup>Legislation was also *enacted* to prevent unfair competition and false advertising.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. In sentence 1, *prevailing* (prī-vā'līng) means \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. In sentence 10, *agitate* (āj'ī-tāt') means \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. In sentence 13, *unbridled* (ŭn-brīd'ld) means \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. In sentence 14, *mounted* (moun'tīd) means \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. In sentence 17, *enacted* (ĕn-āk'tīd) means \_\_\_\_\_.