

- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The United States has a varied population; it is multicultural, multiracial, and multiethnic. In contrast, Japan's population is *homogeneous*—practically all of its people are ethnic Japanese.

*Homogeneous* (hō'mə-jē'nē-əs) means

- A. Asian.                      B. large.                      C. the same throughout.

#### 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 *opportune*, try asking this question: Is this a good time for the boss to tell an injured worker that he's been fired? Since the boss realizes that "this may not be the opportune time," his words to Cranston strongly suggest that *opportune* means "suitable."



## 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. One argument against capital punishment is that if an innocent person is executed, the mistake cannot be *rectified*.

(What cannot be done about a mistake as final as an execution?)

*Rectified* (rĕk'tə-fīd) means

- A. remembered.      B. predicted.      C. corrected.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. It took two days for volunteers to *extricate* the little girl from the bottom of the well.

(How would volunteers try to help the trapped girl?)

*Extricate* (ĕk'strī-kāt') means

- A. free.      B. delay.      C. remember.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Sonya and Liz thought they'd stay good friends forever. But after graduation, their lives *diverged*: Sonya got married, and Liz moved away.

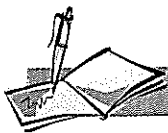
(What relationship did their lives have after graduation?)

*Diverged* (dī-vûrjd') means

- A. came together.      B. improved.      C. went in different directions.

### Explanation

The first sentence provides enough evidence for you to guess that *rectified* means "corrected." *Extricate* in the second sentence means "free." And *diverged* means "went in different directions." (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. Emily's signature, *embellished* with loops and swirls, was easy to recognize.

(What do loops and swirls do to the signature?)

*Embellished* (ĕm-bĕl'īsh) means

- A. hidden.      B. decorated.      C. made plain.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. My three-year-old often fights for her *autonomy* by saying, "I can do it myself."

(What is being fought for with the statement "I can do it myself"?)

*Autonomy* (ô-tôn'ə-mē) means

- A. sister.                      B. independence.                      C. toys.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. After lying *dormant* in their burrows every winter, chipmunks come out again in the spring, looking lively but a bit thin.

(How would you describe animals that have been lying in their burrows all winter?)

*Dormant* (dôr'mənt) means

- A. sick.                      B. busy.                      C. inactive.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. People who suffer from migraine headaches are frequently advised to avoid things that can *precipitate* an attack, such as red wine, chocolate, and some cheeses.

(What do red wine, chocolate, and some cheeses do to a migraine headache?)

*Precipitate* (prī-sĭp'ĭ-tāt') means

- A. trigger.                      B. prevent.                      C. follow.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Hector thought his mother's suggestion to use peanut butter to remove the gum from his hair was *ludicrous*—but it worked!

(What is a likely first reaction to Hector's mother's suggestion?)

*Ludicrous* (lōō'dĭ-krəs) means

- A. practical.                      B. delicious.                      C. ridiculous.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Research shows that almost any unpleasant event, such as frustration, foul odors, or high room temperature, can *provoke* aggression.

(What can unpleasant events do to aggression?)

*Provoke* (prə-vōk') means

- A. imitate.                      B. bring about.                      C. eliminate.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Social psychologists agree that attitudes and actions can have a *reciprocal* relationship: Although attitudes may influence actions, actions can also influence attitudes.

(What type of relationship is described?)

*Reciprocal* (rĭ-sĭp'rə-kəl) means

- A. two-way.                      B. disconnected.                      C. peaceful.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Forgetting has benefits. The mind's ability to *eradicate* unnecessary information keeps the memory from becoming overloaded.

(What would the mind do to unnecessary information to keep the memory from being overloaded?)

*Eradicate* (ĭ-rād'ĭ-kāt') means

- A. erase.                      B. hold on to.                      C. change.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. To test a new drug, subjects in the experimental group are given the drug, while subjects in the control group are given a *placebo* that looks identical.

(What type of substance might the scientists use to show the effects of the real drug?)

*Placebo* (plə-sē'bō) means

- A. surgery.      B. dangerous chemical.      C. harmless fake drug.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Because of a natural barrier between the blood and brain, many substances cannot leave the blood and *permeate* the brain tissues.

(What does the barrier stop substances from doing?)

*Permeate* (pûr'mē-āt') means

- A. resemble.      B. spread through.      C. disappear from.

## 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 provide definitions of important terms. They usually follow a definition with one or more examples to ensure that you understand the word being defined. Here is a short textbook passage that includes definitions and examples:

<sup>1</sup>In all societies there is some **vertical mobility**—moving up or down the status ladder. <sup>2</sup>The upward movement is called *upward mobility* and the downward movement, *downward mobility*. <sup>3</sup>The promotion of a teacher to the position of principal is an example of upward mobility, and demotion from principal to teacher is downward mobility.

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

More about textbook definitions and examples appears on pages 232–233 in the “Relationships II” chapter.



## REVIEW TEST 1

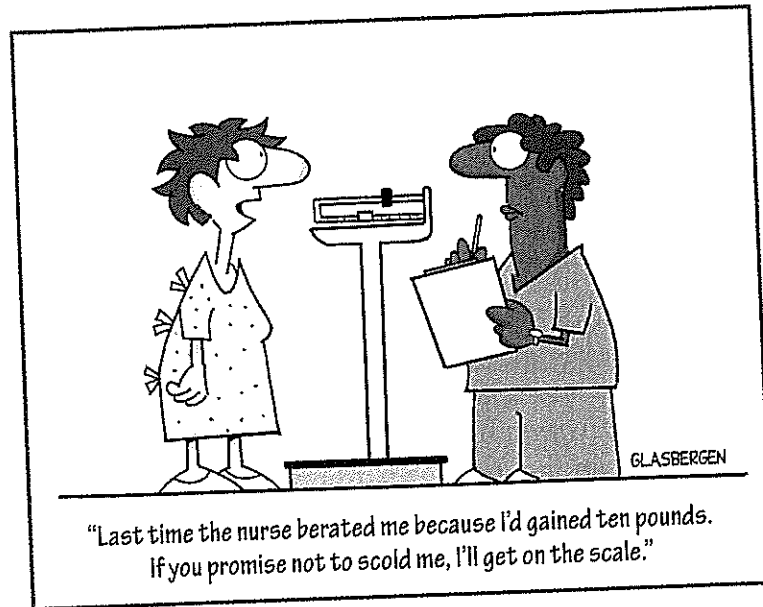
To review what you've learned in this chapter, answer the following questions by filling in the blank or writing the letter of the correct answer.

1. By using \_\_\_\_\_ to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words, you can save time when reading and help make words part of your working vocabulary.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. In the sentence below, which type of context clue is used for the italicized word?  
A. example                      B. synonym                      C. antonym  
Years ago, high-school boys *aspired* (ə-spīrd') to be star athletes and high-school girls wished to be popular; neither wanted to be brilliant students.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. In the sentence below, which type of context clue is used for the italicized word?  
A. example                      B. synonym                      C. antonym  
In happy couples, each partner both brings and seeks *assets* (ās'ěts'); men typically offer status and seek attractiveness; women more often do the reverse.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. In the sentence below, which type of context clue is used for the italicized word?  
A. example                      B. synonym                      C. antonym  
Many students are simply *passive* (pās'iv) during lectures, but it is more productive to be active, taking notes and asking yourself questions about what is being said.
  
5. When textbook authors introduce a new word, they often set it off in *italic* or **boldface** type. They also define the word and usually 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 *berated* (bĭ-rā'tĭd) in the space provided.
- A. complimented      B. ignored      C. criticized
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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, in the space provided, the letter of the best meaning for each italicized word.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Because of residential segregation, schools in urban areas are often *predominantly* (prĭ-dŏm'ə-nənt-lē) black while those in the suburbs are mostly white.
- A. in small part      C. hopefully  
B. reasonably      D. mainly
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. After the funeral, the widow's friends were very *solicitous* (sə-lĭs'ĭ-təs)—they came to see her each day and took turns calling every evening to be sure she was all right.
- A. bold      C. annoyed  
B. concerned      D. careless

