

ambiguous  
 dissident  
 embellish  
 fritter  
 inadvertent  
 inane  
 juxtapose  
 lethargy  
 sporadic  
 subsidize

### Ten Words in Context

In the space provided, write the letter of the meaning closest to that of each **boldfaced** word. Use the context of the sentences to help you figure out each word's meaning.

**1 ambiguous**  
 (ăm-bĩg'yōō-əs)  
 -adjective

— *Ambiguous* means

- The portrait known as the "Mona Lisa" is famous for the woman's **ambiguous** expression. Is she smiling or not?
- Omar left an **ambiguous** message on my answering machine: "Meet me at twelve o'clock." I couldn't tell whether he meant noon or midnight.
  - A. unclear.
  - B. unintentional.
  - C. unpleasant.

**2 dissident**  
 (dĩs'ə-dənt)  
 -noun

— *Dissident* means

- Some **dissidents** in the Catholic church favor such changes as allowing women to be priests and allowing priests to marry.
- In a dictatorship, **dissidents** are not tolerated. People who speak out against the government may be imprisoned or even executed.
  - A. a rebel.
  - B. a dishonest person.
  - C. a foolish person.

**3 embellish**  
 (ēm-bēl'ish)  
 -verb

— *Embellish* means

- Lauren **embellished** the door of her room with postcards from her friends and photos of her cats.
- The cover of the biology textbook was **embellished** with a pattern of colorful seashells.
  - A. to hide.
  - B. to decorate.
  - C. to damage.

**4 fritter**  
 (frĩt'ər)  
 -verb

— *Fritter away* means

- I thought my little sister would **fritter** away her entire allowance on M&M's, but instead of wasting her money, she put it in her piggy bank.
- Vince **fritters** away both his time and his money playing game after game in video arcades.
  - A. to earn.
  - B. to count.
  - C. to waste.

**5 inadvertent**  
 (ĩn'əd-vũr'tnt)  
 -adjective

— *Inadvertent* means

- Alexander Fleming's discovery of penicillin was **inadvertent**. He forgot to cover a dish of bacteria, and some mold got into it. The next day, Fleming found that the mold had killed the bacteria.
- The final draft of Nancy's paper was shorter than the previous version, but this was **inadvertent**. She had accidentally deleted an entire page without realizing it.
  - A. not required.
  - B. not finished.
  - C. not intended.

**6 inane**  
 (ĩn-ān')  
 -adjective

— *Inane* means

- The conversation at the party was **inane**, consisting mainly of foolish comments about whose clothes were the most "awesome."
- Television programming is often so **inane** that TV has been described as "bubble gum for the mind."
  - A. silly.
  - B. interesting.
  - C. shocking.

**7 juxtapose**  
(jŭks'tə-pōz')  
-verb

— *Juxtapose* means

- The photograph dramatically **juxtaposed** white birch trees and a dark gray sky.
  - Dottie spread her new dress out on her bed and then **juxtaposed** all her scarves and jackets to it to see which combination would look best.
- A. to cover up.                      B. to put side by side.                      C. to replace.

**8 lethargy**  
(lēth'ər-jē)  
-noun

— *Lethargy* means

- Although Wendy seemed to recover from the flu, her **lethargy** persisted. She felt exhausted for weeks.
  - With the hot weather, **lethargy** descended upon the class. The students had trouble staying awake, and even the instructor gazed dreamily out the window.
- A. weariness.                      B. hopelessness.                      C. foolishness.

**9 sporadic**  
(spə-rād'ik)  
-adjective

— *Sporadic* means

- It rained continuously until noon. After that, there were only **sporadic** showers.
  - Dave makes **sporadic** attempts to give up smoking, but his occasional efforts have been halfhearted.
- A. steady.                      B. irregular.                      C. long.

**10 subsidize**  
(sŭb'sə-dīz)  
-verb

— *Subsidize* means

- During college, many students are **subsidized** by their parents, while others rely on grants or loans.
  - Public television is **subsidized** by various grants and by individual and community donations.
- A. to pay for.                      B. to advertise.                      C. to criticize.

## Matching Words with Definitions

Following are definitions of the ten words. Clearly write or print each word next to its definition. The sentences above and on the previous page will help you decide on the meaning of each word.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ To place close together, especially in order to compare or contrast
2. \_\_\_\_\_ A great lack of energy; inactivity due to laziness; sluggishness
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Able to be interpreted in more than one way; not clear
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Without sense or meaning; foolish
5. \_\_\_\_\_ A person opposed to established ideas or beliefs, especially in politics or religion
6. \_\_\_\_\_ To decorate; beautify by adding details
7. \_\_\_\_\_ To support financially; provide a grant or contribution
8. \_\_\_\_\_ To spend or waste a little at a time
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Unintentional; accidental
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Happening now and then; occasional

**CAUTION:** Do not go any further until you are sure the above answers are correct. Then you can use the definitions to help you in the following practices. Your goal is eventually to know the words well enough so that you don't need to check the definitions at all.

## Sentence Check 1

Using the answer line provided, complete each item below with the correct word from the box. Use each word once.

A. ambiguous  
F. inane

B. dissident  
G. juxtapose

C. embellish  
H. lethargy

D. fritter  
I. sporadic

E. inadvertent  
J. subsidize

1. Instead of refreshing me, an afternoon nap only deepens my \_\_\_\_; I wake up even sleepier than I was before.
2. I get news of Darren only now and then, in \_\_\_\_ letters from him or his mother.
3. A research grant will \_\_\_\_ Belinda's study of common fears among the elderly.
4. My recent trip to Newark was \_\_\_\_\_. I wanted to go to New York City, but I got on the wrong train.
5. Tracy has learned the hard way not to \_\_\_\_ away her time and affection on friends who don't really care about her.
6. My little brother has \_\_\_\_ (e)d his bedroom ceiling with stars arranged like several of the constellations.
7. In plays and movies, good and evil characters are often \_\_\_\_ (e)d. This contrast makes the good ones seem even better and the bad ones seem even worse.
8. When student \_\_\_\_s led a protest against China's communist leaders in 1989, some students were killed by government troops.
9. Checking a job applicant's references, the personnel manager was puzzled by one \_\_\_\_ comment: "You will be lucky if you can get her to work for you."
10. Steve Martin was poking fun at \_\_\_\_ ideas for products when he said, "I got a fur sink, an electric dog polisher, a gasoline-powered turtleneck sweater—and, of course, I bought some dumb stuff too."

**NOTE:** Now check your answers to these items by turning to page 177. Going over the answers carefully will help you prepare for the next two practices, for which answers are not given.

## Sentence Check 2

Using the answer lines provided, complete each item below with **two** words from the box. Use each word once.

1-2. "Spring fever" isn't really a detriment<sup>o</sup> to health, but it often includes \_\_\_\_: people just want to sleep. Also, attention to work is interrupted off and on by a(n) \_\_\_\_ need to daydream.

3-4. On the cover of the news magazine, two pictures were \_\_\_\_ (e)d: those of a young \_\_\_\_ and the elderly ruler he was opposing.

5-6. Local businesses \_\_\_\_ (e)d our club's Christmas party for the homeless, so we were able to afford a special meal as well as decorations to \_\_\_\_ the room.

\_\_\_\_\_ 7–8. Why do you want to \_\_\_ away your money week after week on tickets for  
 \_\_\_\_\_ silly movies that all the critics agree are \_\_\_?

\_\_\_\_\_ 9–10. This week's episode of one television serial had a(n) \_\_\_ ending: we don't  
 \_\_\_\_\_ know whether one of the characters survives his heart attack or dies. In  
 \_\_\_\_\_ retrospect°, I don't think this was \_\_\_. I believe the producers want to keep  
 us guessing so we'll tune in again next week.

## Final Check: *Grandfather at the Art Museum*

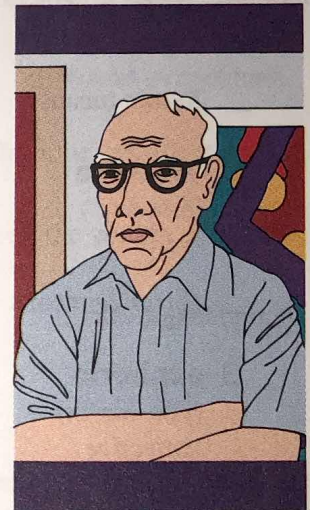
Here is a final opportunity for you to strengthen your knowledge of the ten words. First read the following selection carefully. Then fill in each blank with a word from the box at the top of the previous page. (Context clues will help you figure out which word goes in which blank.) Use each word once.

Last Saturday, my grandfather and I spent some time in the modern section of an art museum. Our visit was completely (1)\_\_\_\_\_. We'd come to see a show of nature photographs and wandered into the wrong room. Instead of leaving, Grandfather just stood there, staring at the paintings. His idea of worthwhile art is the soft-focus photography on greeting cards, and here was an exhibit of angry paintings by political (2)\_\_\_\_\_s.

In one painting, an empty plate and a plate that was piled high with food had been (3)\_\_\_\_\_ (e)d on a table; the tablecloth was an American flag. Around this painting was an ornate golden frame (4)\_\_\_\_\_ (e)d with tiny plastic models of hot dogs, apple pies, and other typical American foods. There was nothing (5)\_\_\_\_\_ about the message—it was crystal-clear. The artist was saying that some people in this country don't have enough to eat. After a few moments of stunned silence, my grandfather jolted the sleepy-looking guard out of his (6)\_\_\_\_\_ by shouting, "Garbage! What is this garbage?"

When we learned that two major corporations had collaborated° to (7)\_\_\_\_\_ this exhibit and even owned some of the art works, Grandfather was outraged. "How dare they (8)\_\_\_\_\_ away their money on one piece of unpatriotic trash after another while people are starving?" I started to say that the painting itself was a protest against starvation, but Grandfather just scoffed° at me. "Don't be (9)\_\_\_\_\_, " he said, squelching° my attempt to explain the painting. "Let's get out of here." So we did.

On the way home, Grandfather stared out the car window. He was silent except for (10)\_\_\_\_\_ sputterings of "Garbage!" and "Incredible!"



**Scores** Sentence Check 2 \_\_\_\_\_ % Final Check \_\_\_\_\_ %