



aesthetic  
catalyst  
disparage  
ingratiate  
insipid

peerless  
propriety  
virtuoso  
vitriolic  
whimsical

## 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 **aesthetic**  
(ēs-thēt'īk)  
-adjective

*Aesthetic* means

- A vegetable garden not only is practical but has **aesthetic** value, too; the shining green peppers, red tomatoes, and purple eggplants are a beautiful sight.
  - Your green plaid pants and orange flowered shirt do not make a very **aesthetic** combination.
- a. pleasing to the senses.      b. moral.      c. financial.

2 **catalyst**  
(kāt'l-īst)  
-noun

*Catalyst* means

- World War II was a **catalyst** for social change. When women took factory jobs, filling in for men who were away fighting, the concept of "women's work" was permanently expanded.
  - Seeing a friend die of an overdose was a **catalyst** in Herbert's decision to stop abusing drugs.
- a. something that causes or speeds up a process.      b. something that prevents a process.      c. something that is harmful.

3 **disparage**  
(dī-spār'ij)  
-verb

*Disparage* means

- An ironclad rule of politics used to be "Never **disparage** anyone in your party." For the sake of unity, party members weren't supposed to criticize each other.
  - "I hate to be the one to **disparage** your so-called best friend," Shawna told Carol, "but I happen to know she is trying to break up your marriage."
- a. to discourage.      b. to speak ill of.      c. to ignore.

4 **ingratiate**  
(īn-grā'shē-āt')  
-verb

*Ingratiate* means

- When he was stopped for speeding, Luke tried hard to **ingratiate** himself with the officer by complimenting the police department, but he got a ticket anyway.
  - It's sickening the way Howie **ingratiates** herself with the boss by agreeing with her about every little thing and telling her how wonderful she is.
- a. to argue with someone.      b. to flatter someone.      c. to make demands.

5 **insipid**  
(īn-sīp'īd)  
-adjective

*Inspid* means

- A French novelist once said, "A story without love is like beef without mustard—an **insipid** dish."
  - The cast tried hard to put some sparkle and zest into the play, but the script was so pointless and **insipid** that their efforts fell flat.
- a. disgusting.      b. inspiring.      c. boring.

6 **peerless**  
(pīr'līs)  
-adjective

*Peerless* means

- "She's **peerless**," the singer's fans insisted. "No one can compete with her."
  - When the beloved teacher retired, her students presented her with a plaque: "To a **peerless** professor and a matchless friend."
- a. without an equal.      b. critical.      c. perceptive.

- 7 **propriety**  
(prə-prī'ī-tē)  
-noun
- Propriety* means
- Helen, a newspaper reporter, is concerned about the **propriety** of her writing stories about the town council when her husband is a member of the council.
  - People questioned the **propriety** of the woman's beginning to date only two weeks after her husband had been killed.
- a. opportunity.                      b. correctness.                      c. cost.
- 8 **virtuoso**  
(vûr'chōō-ō'sō)  
-noun
- Virtuoso* means
- Woody Allen has a funny line about a woman who gave up her lifetime ambition of becoming a violin **virtuoso** when she realized she would have to study the violin.
  - The pianist was disappointed by the review of his performance: "He is competent, but no **virtuoso**—that spark of genius is missing."
- a. a moral person.                      b. a repairperson.                      c. a master performer.
- 9 **vitriolic**  
(vīt'rē-ōl'ik)  
-adjective
- Vitriolic* means
- Some people who call in to radio talk shows make shockingly **vitriolic** remarks; they seem to be using the show as an outlet for their most bitter, vicious thoughts.
  - A famous piece of advice: When you are furious at someone, write him or her a **vitriolic** letter, using the ugliest, most cutting words you can find. Read it over to make sure it's as hateful as you want. Then tear it up and throw it away.
- a. debatable.                      b. hurtful.                      c. insane.
- 10 **whimsical**  
(wīm'zī-kəl)  
-adjective
- Whimsical* means
- Toni and Ed's decision to marry seemed **whimsical**. They had known each other only briefly, and to tell the truth, they didn't even like each other that much.
  - Some of the policies at our school seem pointless and **whimsical**. For example, students are allowed to audit courses in science but not in math, the library is closed every other Tuesday, and coffee is not served in the dining hall.
- a. impulsive.                      b. appropriate.                      c. frightening.

### 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.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Having a sense of beauty; giving an impression of beauty
- \_\_\_\_\_ To charm; win favor; make oneself agreeable
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sharply critical; harsh; biting
- \_\_\_\_\_ An expert, particularly in the arts
- \_\_\_\_\_ A person or thing that brings about change
- \_\_\_\_\_ Appropriateness
- \_\_\_\_\_ To criticize; put down
- \_\_\_\_\_ Flat; tasteless; unexciting
- \_\_\_\_\_ So superior as to be without equal; incomparable; unsurpassed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fanciful; odd; arbitrary

**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, complete each item below with the correct word from the box. Use each word once.

a. aesthetic	b. catalyst	c. disparage	d. ingratiate	e. insipid
f. peerless	g. propriety	h. virtuoso	i. vitriolic	j. whimsical

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Mozart was considered a(n) \_\_\_\_ at an early age: he was performing before royalty by age six.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Professor Lattimore is an unpopular teacher because his criticism is so \_\_\_\_\_. He is not only harsh about students' work but is also highly critical of students personally.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Though I like tea, I find it \_\_\_\_ without lemon to liven it up.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. At first, Dad said we couldn't keep the little dog, but then Muffin \_\_\_\_ (ed) herself by sitting down in front of him and politely offering her paw.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. "Don't \_\_\_\_ the instructor for failing you," my roommate said, "Instead, I'd suggest you stop bad-mouthing her and work harder." It was good advice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. "Well, I see that our \_\_\_\_ ball club has been beaten again," Matt said sarcastically, as the baseball team lost its ninth game in a row.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I thought my grandmother's sense of \_\_\_\_ would be offended by my sister's plan to be married barefoot in a meadow, but Grandma loved the idea.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The \_\_\_\_ that started World War I was the assassination of an Austrian archduke—after that, fighting broke out among many factions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I've asked Sylvia to help me redecorate my apartment, because she has the best \_\_\_\_ know-how of all my friends.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Getting a pet should not be a(n) \_\_\_\_, spur-of-the-moment decision. Owning a dog or cat is a long-term commitment that requires thought and planning.

*NOTE:* Now check your answers to these questions by turning to page 176. 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, complete each item below with **two** words from the box. Use each word once.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1-2. "It pains me to \_\_\_\_ the new library," wrote the architecture critic, "but the building is needlessly ugly. All \_\_\_\_ considerations have been completely ignored."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3-4. The composer Franz Liszt was also a piano \_\_\_\_, a master performer who was considered \_\_\_\_: no other musician of his day had such amazing technique.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5-6. "Our school has too many odd, \_\_\_\_ rules," Reba said. "Elect me student body president, and I promise to be a(n) \_\_\_\_ for change. I'll work hard to rescind° these quirky regulations."

\_\_\_\_\_ 7–8. At work, Edgar tries to \_\_\_\_\_ himself with his supervisors by behaving with the utmost \_\_\_\_\_. He intends to win their approval by the correctness of his appearance and manners.

\_\_\_\_\_ 9–10. The review of the new restaurant was \_\_\_\_\_. “Most of the food is \_\_\_\_\_, and what isn’t tasteless is disgusting,” it read. “The waiters belong in a zoo. The decor is ludicrous°—it looks like something left over from a horror movie.”

### ➤ *Final Check: Isadora Duncan*

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.

Isadora Duncan was a famous dancer born in 1877. She was known for her dramatic personality as well as her revolutionary way of dancing. She rejected the strict style of ballet, considering it boring and (1)\_\_\_\_\_. She had an affinity° for dance that was naturally (2)\_\_\_\_\_, capturing the beauty of the wind, flowers, and stars. To express that idea, she danced barefoot, wearing voluminous° fluttering silk scarves. Her dancing was (3)\_\_\_\_\_, based on the inspiration of the moment, and was never quite the same twice. In her private life, too, Duncan cared little for most people’s ideas of (4)\_\_\_\_\_; she had two children before marrying. When she did marry, she chose a Russian poet seventeen years younger than she.

At first, audiences did not know what to make of Duncan’s unusual dance style. The critics’ reviews were (5)\_\_\_\_\_. They (6)\_\_\_\_\_ (e)d and vilified° Duncan, calling her a joke and a fake. But her talent and charm enabled her to (7)\_\_\_\_\_ herself with the public. She was eventually seen as a(n) (8)\_\_\_\_\_ of her own free-spirited style.

In 1927, when Duncan was living in France, she admired a sports car driven by a guest. He offered to take her for a drive. She agreed. Wrapping one of her trademark long silk scarves around her neck, she called to the others, “Goodbye, my friends, I am off to glory!” The car started off. The end of Duncan’s scarf began tangled in one of its wheels, and Duncan was strangled.

In her lifetime, Duncan was regarded as a(n) (9)\_\_\_\_\_ dancer with an unusual style. Today she is remembered as a(n) (10)\_\_\_\_\_ for many of the new developments in modern dance.

<i>Scores</i>	Sentence Check 2 _____%	Final Check _____%
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Enter your scores above and in the vocabulary performance chart on the inside back cover of the book.