

CHAPTER
15

callous
desecrate
evanescent
heed
indigent

paragon
provincial
steadfast
supercilious
usurp

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 **callous**
(kāl'əs)
-adjective

Callous means

- Only the most **callous** person is not touched by pictures of starving children in refugee camps.
- Doctors and nurses in emergency rooms may seem **callous**, but if they let themselves become upset by the suffering they see, they could not do their jobs.
 - unfamiliar.
 - unfeeling.
 - unqualified.

2 **desecrate**
(dēs'ī-krāt')
-verb

Desecrate means

- My mother and her sister Belle have not been on speaking terms for years. "I wouldn't let Belle come in our door," Mother says. "Her presence would **desecrate** our home!"
- New Englanders feel that clam chowder is **desecrated** by the addition of tomatoes. There's not a speck of tomato in pure New England chowder.
 - to adorn.
 - to dishonor.
 - to finish.

3 **evanescent**
(ēv'ə-nēs'ənt)
-adjective

Evanescent means

- My grandmother seemed to have an **evanescent** scent of vanilla about her. When I hugged her, I would sometimes catch a sweet whiff of it.
- It is a wonderful, rare thing to get a glimpse of the northern lights, which appear as **evanescent** flickers of color on the horizon.
 - briefly present.
 - long-lasting.
 - imaginary.

4 **heed**
(hēd)
-verb

Heed means

- Parents often wish that children were more willing to **heed** their advice.
- The senator was voted out of office after just one term because he refused to **heed** the voters' wishes.
 - to listen to.
 - to misunderstand.
 - to ignore.

5 **indigent**
(īn'dī-jənt)
-adjective

Indigent means

- The nun Mother Teresa was famous for her work among the **indigent** people of India, the people she called "the poorest of the poor."
- A soup kitchen and free clothing outlet has opened on West Avenue to help the city's **indigent** population.
 - important.
 - well-behaved.
 - needy.

6 **paragon**
(pār'ə-gŏn')
-noun

Paragon means

- Acme Company presented itself as a **paragon** of business ethics. Therefore, the public was surprised at reports that Acme was dumping toxic wastes into streams and that its executives had fled the country with the stockholders' money.
- The New England town meeting is frequently described as a **paragon** of democracy. All citizens can participate and make their voices heard.
 - an ancestor.
 - an imitation.
 - an ideal example.

- 7 **provincial**
(prə-vīn' shəl)
-adjective
- Provincial* means
- Just because Bill lives in the country, do not think he is **provincial**. On the contrary, he is a well-educated man who reads a great deal and keeps up with what's going on in the world.
 - The local paper is too **provincial** for me. Its stories are written from a very limited point of view that doesn't consider other ways of looking at questions.
 - a. narrow-minded.
 - b. broad-minded.
 - c. calm.
- 8 **steadfast**
(stēd' fāst')
-adjective
- Steadfast* means
- There's an old joke about the most **steadfast** member of an orchestra: a hard-working clarinetist who comes unflinchingly to every rehearsal. Then he tells the conductor that he's sorry, but he can't make it to the actual performance.
 - On their golden anniversary, Dad made a touching toast to Mom, saying that she had been his "**steadfast** companion and true helpmeet for half a century."
 - a. forgetful.
 - b. faithful.
 - c. grateful.
- 9 **supercilious**
(sūp' pər-sīl' ē-əs)
-adjective
- Supercilious* means
- After a conference with her son's teacher, Jane was fuming because of the teacher's **supercilious** attitude. "She treated me like dirt under her feet," Jane said bitterly.
 - The **supercilious** hotel clerk lost his job when he asked a plainly-dressed foreign-looking woman in the lobby to leave. She was the hotel owner's mother.
 - a. snobbish.
 - b. sensitive.
 - c. supportive.
- 10 **usurp**
(yūō-sūrp')
-verb
- Usurp* means
- "My place has been **usurped**!" said Gordon indignantly when he found that someone had beaten him to his favorite study spot in the library.
 - If you get a puppy, it is important to reassure your old dog that the newcomer won't **usurp** his place in your affections. Give the old dog plenty of extra love to show him he still comes first—the puppy won't mind.
 - a. to share.
 - b. to steal.
 - c. to support.

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 treat with extreme disrespect; to defile
2. _____ Gradually disappearing; fading away like a vapor
3. _____ A model of excellence or perfection
4. _____ Limited and narrow in outlook; unsophisticated
5. _____ To seize power or position by force
6. _____ Proud; scornful; looking down on others
7. _____ Not having enough to live on; very poor; impoverished
8. _____ Firmly and consistently loyal
9. _____ Hardened in mind or feelings
10. _____ To pay attention to

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. callous	b. desecrate	c. evanescent	d. heed	e. indigent
f. paragon	g. provincial	h. steadfast	i. supercilious	j. usurp

- _____ 1. Tyrell is the most ___ player on his soccer team. He's totally committed, and he never misses a game or a practice session.
- _____ 2. Food vendors, postcard stands, and the like are not allowed at the war memorial. Such commercial ventures would ___ this shrine to the war dead.
- _____ 3. The farm geese moved restlessly as the wild geese flew overhead. They were unsure whether to stay around their little pond or ___ the call of their wild cousins and fly south.
- _____ 4. In the small town where I grew up, there was a simple-minded, ___ man everyone knew as Tom. The local restaurants gave him meals, and members of several churches provided him with clothes.
- _____ 5. When I woke up, I could remember little of my dream. Like many dreams, it was ___, quickly slipping away from my memory.
- _____ 6. Some parents fear that letting their children watch violent TV shows will make the children ___, uncaring about the suffering of others.
- _____ 7. When she was a little girl, Darlene thought the pastor of her church was wise and all-knowing. But as an adult, she saw him as a narrow-minded, ___ man who saw the world in ridiculously black-and-white terms.
- _____ 8. Not realizing that Dad is the only one who ever sits in the brown recliner, my date innocently sat there. "Who is this person who has ___(e)d my throne?" Dad roared at the poor boy.
- _____ 9. The elegant boutique in town must go out of its way to find ___ clerks. The last time I walked in, the woman there glanced at my shabby raincoat and said haughtily, "I doubt that we have anything in your price range."
- _____ 10. Reading about our town's Woman of the Year made me so depressed that I wanted to go back to bed. This ___ not only runs her own successful business, has a happy marriage, and raises apparently perfect children, but she also makes all her own clothes from cotton she spins herself.

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. When I took my old wind-up watch in for cleaning, the ___ clerk sneered, "No one wears those anymore." I didn't ___ him, but simply said, "Please have it ready by tomorrow."

- _____ 3-4. Father used to say, "Don't harden your heart against the poor." Having been _____ once himself, he felt strongly about teaching his progeny° never to become _____.
- _____ 5-6. It's common for older children to fear that a baby will _____ their place in the family. Hostility toward the newcomer is usually _____, though, if the older children are made to feel loved and wanted.
- _____ 7-8. The dog is often said to be a(n) _____ of _____ friendship. In fact, a traditional name for a dog, "Fido," is Latin for "I am faithful."
- _____ 9-10. Bettina was opposed to the exhibition of pop art, arguing that it would _____ the halls of the traditional old museum. "Don't be so _____!" her boyfriend said. "Broaden your aesthetic° horizons."

➤ Final Check: The Strange Case of X

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.

X is a writer, and his case is a strange one: He still uses a typewriter—a manual typewriter. No, X is not (1)_____. He doesn't live a primitive village where computers are unheard of; he lives in a modern city. No, X is not (2)_____ either. He is not a starving artist but a successful professional who could well afford a computer. When asked about his refusal to (3)_____ the call of the computer, X gives an eloquent° reply:

"My typewriter has been my loyal, (4)_____ companion for years. How could I be so heartless, so (5)_____, as to toss it aside and let a computer (6)_____ its place? Also, the manual typewriter is a(n) (7)_____ of all that is best in technology. It burns no fossil fuels. It does not pollute the atmosphere. It does not deplete the ozone layer. Why should I (8)_____ the purity of my office with a computer?"

Also, for a long time, X predicted that computers would prove to be (9)_____. He reasoned: Why rush out to buy something that will be just a passing fad? But he seems to have been wrong about that, and now some of his (10)_____ friends (he calls them "computer snobs") look down on him and say he is being quixotic°.

I often think about X's case. In fact, I thought of him just yesterday when my computer announced a "disk error." I thought of him again this morning when it had a "system failure." I wonder if X and his indefatigable° typewriter might have the last laugh.

Scores	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.