



CHAPTER
23

ameliorate
assent
haphazard
incontrovertible
intangible

negate
potent
rigorous
spurious
therapeutic

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 **ameliorate**
(ə-mēl'yə-rāt')
-verb

__ *Ameliorate* means

- The precinct Outreach Committee was established to **ameliorate** police-community relations.
- Communication between parents and kids can often be **ameliorated** by just a few meetings with a family therapist.

a. to improve. b. to make worse. c. to end.

2 **assent**
(ə-sēnt')
-verb

__ *Assent* means

- A doctor wrote a book advising parents to let their kids live on candy if that's what the kids wanted. Most parents would not **assent** to this proposal, though.
- When a motion is voted on in a formal meeting, the "ayes" or "yes" votes are those who **assent**. The "nays" or "no" votes are those who disagree.

a. to have the same opinion. b. to have a different opinion. c. not to care.

3 **haphazard**
(hăp-hăz'ərd)
-adjective

__ *Haphazard* means

- I never make a shopping list; I just wander through the grocery store, picking up items in a **haphazard** manner.
- Dan did a **haphazard** job of proofreading his term paper. Consequently, he caught some errors but missed many others.

a. happy. b. carefully planned. c. unplanned.

4 **incontrovertible**
(ĩn-kõn'trə-vũr'tə-bəl)
-adjective

__ *Incontrovertible* means

- It's **incontrovertible** that Jeffrey is Paul's son; he looks exactly like his dad.
- Even in mathematics, there is not always one **incontrovertible** answer to a problem—sometimes two or more answers can be defended.

a. unknown. b. mistaken. c. unquestionable.

5 **intangible**
(ĩn-tãn'jə-bəl)
-adjective

Intangible means

- Although Grandpa died with little money, he left us an **intangible** legacy: his strength, his warmth, and his honesty.
- As a child, I thought of Christmas in terms of the gifts I'd get. Now I focus on its **intangible** aspects—family closeness and sharing.

a. not permanent. b. not important. c. not touchable.

6 **negate**
(nĩ-gāt')
-verb

Negate means

- The jury awarded a million dollars to the accident victim, but the judge later **negated** that award, reducing it to only a few thousand.
- The board of elections had to **negate** the results of the mayoral race when it was discovered that more than half of the voting machines were malfunctioning.

a. to make invalid. b. to demonstrate. c. to confirm.

7 **potent**
(pōt'nt)
-adjective

Potent means

- A child can easily overdose on pills meant to reduce pain and fever—they are **potent** medicines that need to be given carefully and in the right dosage.
- Alcohol is **potent** stuff—just as with drugs, one can die from an overdose.
 - a. pure.
 - b. strong.
 - c. expensive.

8 **rigorous**
(rīg'ər-əs)
-adjective

Rigorous means

- There are several hiking trails in this area, ranging from easy ones for beginners to **rigorous** ones for experts.
- Erin is going through **rigorous** fitness training to get ready to run a marathon next month.
 - a. easy.
 - b. difficult.
 - c. unfair.

9 **spurious**
(spyōōr'ē-əs)
-adjective

Spurious means

- “I asked for real cream for my coffee,” said the customer in the restaurant, “not some **spurious**, tasteless substitute made of chemicals.”
- When a supposed new work by Beethoven was discovered, music experts came from all over the world to decide if it was real or **spurious**.
 - a. false.
 - b. improved.
 - c. left over.

10 **therapeutic**
(thēr'ə-pyōō'tik)
-adjective

Therapeutic means

- Melina had always heard that the “milk” in milkweed gets rid of warts, so she wrote to the Board of Health about it. The reply stated: “Its **therapeutic** properties, if any, are not proved.”
- Diego’s insurance company would not pay for his surgery. The company ruled that the operation was experimental, not **therapeutic**.
 - a. dangerous.
 - b. magical.
 - c. healing.

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 make better
2. _____ Powerful
3. _____ Fake; counterfeit
4. _____ Careless; lacking a plan; lacking order
5. _____ To make ineffective; void; invalidate
6. _____ Challenging
7. _____ Serving to cure or heal
8. _____ Not material; not perceivable by touch; not concrete
9. _____ To agree to
10. _____ Undeniable

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. ameliorate	b. assent	c. haphazard	d. incontrovertible	e. intangible
f. negate	g. potent	h. rigorous	i. spurious	j. therapeutic

- _____ 1. "You did a really ___ job of mowing the lawn," Mr. Dixon told his son. "Look—you left strips of tall grass all over the yard."
- _____ 2. Exercise not only improves your health and fitness, but it also has a(n) ___ advantage: it raises your spirits.
- _____ 3. Good study skills are a(n) ___ tool for any college student.
- _____ 4. Sandra wasn't sure she would make it through the ___ computer programming class, but when it was over, she felt very proud of herself.
- _____ 5. When he was caught with the stolen jewels, the man made up a(n) ___ story about having found them in an alley.
- _____ 6. Jerry was nervous about asking Zoe to live with him, not sure if she would ___ to the suggestion.
- _____ 7. The evidence against the accused man is ___. Even his lawyers admit that he'll be found guilty.
- _____ 8. "I said I'd let you have the car next weekend," Tom's mother said, "but I'll ___ that agreement if your behavior doesn't improve between now and then."
- _____ 9. "This procedure is diagnostic, not ___," the doctor explained. "That is, it's used just to find out what's wrong with you, not to treat you."
- _____ 10. "Settlement houses" such as the famous Hull House in Chicago were established to ___ conditions in the slums by providing social services.

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

- _____ 1-2. Ghost stories grip our imagination partly because the spooks are ___ but nevertheless ___: how can creatures that are just thin air be so powerful?
- _____ 3-4. To do well on a difficult, ___ exam, you need to plan and organize your studying. An unplanned, ___ approach will not get you a good grade.
- _____ 5-6. The evidence against the defendant seemed ___—beyond dispute—but his lawyer intended to call a surprise witness whose testimony would ___ the prosecution's supposedly irrefutable^o case.

7-8. "Snake oil," worthless stuff with no ___ effects, was sold in traveling medicine shows as a cure-all. Now the term "snake oil" refers to any kind of phony, ___ claim.

9-10. "I can't ___ to your proposal to cut tuition in half," the college president told the protesting students. "It might ___ your finances, but it would wreck the school's budget."

➤ Final Check: When Is a Treatment Therapy?

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.

When a news item appears about a health insurer's refusal to pay for "experimental" medical treatment, people often wonder exactly what this means. The answer is that an experimental procedure is being contrasted with a(n) (1) _____ treatment, which offers a good chance of recovery or improvement: it will cure patients or (2) _____ their condition. In addition, to be considered a therapy, a treatment must be safe. For instance, a(n) (3) _____ medicine may have equally strong, but unwanted, side effects that can lessen or even (4) _____ its benefits.

How does a new treatment become established as therapy? This is not a(n) (5) _____ process: it does not happen by chance but involves a lengthy period of (6) _____ research. The research is usually done first with animals and then with large numbers of people. The humans, of course, must (7) _____ to being experimental subjects: this is the meaning of the well-known term "informed consent." The scientists who test a treatment must be objective and dispassionate°. They disregard (8) _____ effects such as "giving the patient hope." Instead, they look for solid, (9) _____ evidence of physical results, and they are not swayed by (10) _____, untenable° claims of nonexistent cures.

Only a treatment that performs well on this formidable° test has real promise, so insurers that are wary of "experiments" are not necessarily being unreasonable or whimsical°.

Scores	Sentence Check 2 _____ %	Final Check _____ %
--------	--------------------------	---------------------

Enter your scores above and in the vocabulary performance chart on the inside back cover of the book.