

CHAPTER
24

altercation
circumspect
deference
guile
impassive

malevolent
placate
pugnacious
tirade
volatile

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 **altercation**
(ôl'tər-kā'shən)
-noun
- Altercation means
- The **altercation** between the store clerk and customer began when the customer accused the clerk of shortchanging him.
 - The party guests were embarrassed when they heard their host and hostess having a bitter **altercation** in the kitchen.
- a. an embrace. b. a task. c. a quarrel.
- 2 **circumspect**
(sûr'kəm-spěkt')-adjective
- Circumspect means
- Tory's two roommates are feuding. Tory has wisely decided to be **circumspect** and consider every aspect of the situation before becoming involved.
 - Someone was stealing money from the cash register, but the boss chose to be **circumspect** and not act for a while. He didn't want to make an accusation without weighing all the possible consequences.
- a. careful. b. honest. c. aggressive.
- 3 **deference**
(děf'ər-əns)
-noun
- Deference means
- A few generations ago, a young person was expected to stand up when an older person entered the room. That kind of **deference** is rare nowadays.
 - In **deference** to his parents' wishes, Alan agreed not to get his eyebrow pierced until he was over twenty-one.
- a. defiance. b. a respectful giving in. c. a difference of opinion.
- 4 **guile**
(gīl)
-noun
- Guile means
- The older boy used **guile** to decide who would get the last piece of pie. He told his little brother, "We'll flip a coin for it. Heads, I win; tails, you lose."
 - Psalm 24 in the Bible says: "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking **guile**."
- a. deceit. b. nonsense. c. truthfulness.
- 5 **impassive**
(im-pās'iv)
-adjective
- Impassive means
- No one could tell what the judges were thinking during the competition—they had trained themselves to remain **impassive**.
 - How could you remain **impassive** during that heartbreaking movie? I cried so much I used up a box of tissues.
- a. expressing horror. b. expressing love. c. expressing no feelings.
- 6 **malevolent**
(mə-lēv'ə-lənt)
-adjective
- Malevolent means
- The ancient Egyptian tomb of Tutankhamen was said to be haunted by a **malevolent** spirit—a curse would fall on anyone who entered it.
 - Early religions typically believed in many gods. Some gods were good and helpful, but others were **malevolent** and would cause harm if they were displeased.
- a. friendly. b. visible. c. evil.

- 7 **placate**
(plā'kāt')
-verb
- Placate* means
- José had not finished his homework, but he was able to **placate** his teacher by offering to do it at lunchtime.
 - In ancient times, people tried to keep volcanoes from erupting by offering food and gifts to **placate** the "volcano god."
- a. to anger. b. to calm. c. to fight.
- 8 **pugnacious**
(püg-nā'shās)
-adjective
- Pugnacious* means
- There are two **pugnacious** children in the class who constantly start fights on the playground.
 - Although Max is a professional boxer, he is not **pugnacious** in his private life. In fact, he is kind and gentle.
- a. quarrelsome. b. curious. c. funny.
- 9 **tirade**
(tī'rād')-noun
- Tirade* means
- The meeting of the school board was interrupted by a long **tirade** from a parent who had come to express his fury about the amount of homework his son had to do.
 - The history instructor, whose lectures were usually scholarly and calm, startled the class one day with a heated **tirade** about the Vietnam war.
- a. a dialogue. b. an angry speech. c. a theory.
- 10 **volatile**
(völ'ə-tl)
-adjective
- Volatile* means
- Manic-depressives have a psychiatric disorder that makes them extremely **volatile**. They have episodes of excitement and giddy cheerfulness but then fall into deep gloom.
 - Jean is a difficult roommate because her moods are so **volatile**. One day she's on top of the world; the next day she's in the depths of despair.
- a. insensitive. b. indirect. c. changeable.

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.

- _____ A heated argument
- _____ Considering all the circumstances relevant to an action or a decision; prudent; cautious
- _____ To soothe or pacify, especially by making concessions
- _____ A long, passionate, critical speech
- _____ Slyness and cunning; trickery
- _____ Tending to change often; unstable
- _____ A courteous yielding to another's wishes
- _____ Having or showing ill will; malicious; spiteful
- _____ Eager and ready to fight
- _____ Showing no emotion

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. altercation | b. circumspect | c. deference | d. guile | e. impassive |
| f. malevolent | g. placate | h. pugnacious | i. tirade | j. volatile |

- _____ 1. Steve is not being at all ___ about his affair. He meets the "other woman" in public places where his wife frequently goes, as if he hasn't considered the consequences of getting caught.
- _____ 2. The newspaper story warned of a band of thieves who used ___ to charm and befriend elderly people, get into their homes, and then rob them.
- _____ 3. Jerry will never be a good poker player, because he can't keep his face _____. If he gets a good hand, he looks delighted; if the hand is bad, he frowns and shakes his head.
- _____ 4. The two children were friendly with each other until they both wanted to play with the toy truck. Then there was a fierce ___ over who would get it.
- _____ 5. I never speak to my neighbor if I can avoid it. He is so ___ that he can take offense and start a fight over the most innocent remark.
- _____ 6. Alana and Len postponed their wedding in ___ to his parents, who were about to leave on a world cruise they'd been planning for years.
- _____ 7. The French have a saying about their ___ climate: "If you don't like our weather, wait ten minutes." And the weather in France often does seem to change that quickly!
- _____ 8. Invited to present a talk about the work his drug rehabilitation center was doing, the director instead gave a harsh ___ about cuts in state funding.
- _____ 9. After Cindy was served a slice of meat with a piece of glass in it, the restaurant manager tried to ___ her by giving her several gift certificates for free meals.
- _____ 10. Ferocious animals are not _____. They act out of instinct, not from any spiteful desire to hurt.

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. June tried to remain stoic^o and ___ during her father's angry ___, but finally she could no longer hide her feelings and burst into tears.
- _____ 3-4. The crowd at the game seemed _____. There was a lot of rough kidding, and though some of it was good-natured, the fans looked as if they might turn mean and ___ at any moment.

- _____ 5-6. The poisoner in the movie was _____ but also _____. She concealed her warped, evil plans by posing as a prim, proper librarian.
- _____ 7-8. "In _____ to our neighbors," said a sign at the sidewalk café, "let's not make too much noise." Nearby residents had complained, and the owner wanted to _____ them.
- _____ 9-10. To end a long, grueling^o _____ with his roommate, Adam resorted to _____. "I guess you're right," he said, not meaning a word of it.

► Final Check: Hawks and Doves

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.

Are you a hawk or a dove? According to some scientists who study behavior, a "hawk" is a fighter, a(n) (1) _____ individual who meets every issue head-on. Hawks are not necessarily (2) _____: they don't wish evil on other people. But they are (3) _____: in a conflict, they tend to react angrily—to "explode"—and they are not likely to back down. They may use words, in an abusive (4) _____, or they may use physical violence, or both.

A "dove" is cautious and (5) _____. Doves want to avoid trouble. If a(n) (6) _____ arises, they will try to stop it or at least keep the quarrel from getting any worse. They'll try to (7) _____ their opponents by being soothing, soft-spoken, and submissive^o, and by listening with polite (8) _____. Doves aren't necessarily angels: they sometimes use (9) _____ and duplicity^o to obtain their own ends; and their unemotional, (10) _____ reaction may be part of a plan of deceit. Usually, though, they are sincere about being peaceable and about their willingness to acquiesce^o in another's wishes or capitulate^o to another's demands.

Of course, people cannot be divided neatly into these two categories, and most of us probably show some dovish traits as well as some hawkish traits. But the question above is a fair one. Think about yourself and about people you know: On the whole, are you peace-loving, conciliatory^o doves or warlike, irascible^o hawks?

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

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