



capricious
catharsis
discrepancy
ephemeral
induce

phenomenon
rectify
resolution
retract
serene

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 **capricious**
(kə-prīsh'əs)
-adjective

Capricious means

- It's understandable when a child says "I want to be a firefighter" one day and "I want to be a doctor" the next, but it's strange for an adult to be so **capricious**.
- The actress is so spoiled and **capricious** that she'll order an entire new wardrobe, then decide she doesn't like any of it and throw all the clothes away.
a. impulsive. b. wicked. c. intelligent.

2 **catharsis**
(kē-thār'sis)
-noun

— *Catharsis* means

- Some therapists advise their clients to punch and kick pillows. The idea is that the patients can experience **catharsis** by releasing their anger that way.
- People in some families never raise their voices, while others seem to need to achieve **catharsis** by yelling at each other occasionally.
a. confusion. b. letting out feelings. c. love.

3 **discrepancy**
(dī-skrēp'an-sē)
-noun

Discrepancy means

- After a **discrepancy** was found in the accounts, an investigation revealed that one of the bookkeepers had been stealing.
- The police solved the homicide case by asking all the suspects to account for their movements on the night of the killing. There was a **discrepancy** in one person's story—half an hour was missing—and he turned out to be the killer.
a. a reduction. b. an increase. c. a difference.

4 **ephemeral**
(ī-fēm'ər-əl)
-adjective

— *Ephemeral* means

- "Cooking is an **ephemeral** art," said Mom. "You create something beautiful, people gobble it up, and in minutes it's gone."
- One theory about fireworks is that they fascinate us because they are so **ephemeral**: they burst and fade away almost immediately.
a. worthless. b. impossible to explain. c. brief.

5 **induce**
(īn-dōōs')
-verb

— *Induce* means

- The hypnotist claimed to be able to **induce** a trance in any volunteer.
- Whatever **induced** you to do your Bugs Bunny imitation at that very formal dinner?
a. to cause. b. to prevent. c. to predict.

6 **phenomenon**
(fī-nōm'ə-nōn')
-noun

Phenomenon means

- "Déjà vu" is a **phenomenon** almost everyone has experienced. It is the sensation, while hearing or seeing something for the first time, that one has heard or seen it before.
- A comet was a terrifying **phenomenon** in earlier centuries. No one knew what comets were, so when one appeared in the sky, people saw it as a sign of disaster.
a. an observable event. b. something imaginary. c. a failure.

- 7 **rectify**
(rĕk'tə-fī')
-verb
- Rectify means
- According to an old story, when Abraham Lincoln was a store clerk, he short-changed a customer by a nickel, then walked miles to her house to **rectify** the situation.
 - I put a cup of salt instead of a cup of sugar into the cake batter. There's no way to **rectify** the mistake, I'll have to throw the whole mess out.
 - a. to repeat.
 - b. to discuss.
 - c. to correct.
- 8 **resolution**
(rĕz'ə-lōō'shən)
-noun
- Resolution means
- By increasing the police force, installing better street lights, and encouraging neighborhood watch programs, the new mayor demonstrated her **resolution** to make the city a safer place to live.
 - When Jane's brother made a nasty remark about her husband, Jane forgot her **resolution** not to lose her temper.
 - a. a question.
 - b. a vow.
 - c. a repetition.
- 9 **retract**
(rĭ-trăkt')
-verb
- Retract means
- Jane says she will never speak to her brother again unless he will **retract** his insult to her husband.
 - No one can trust Harry's promises: he **retracts** them as soon as he makes them.
 - a. to withdraw.
 - b. to strengthen.
 - c. to remember.
- 10 **serene**
(sə-rĕn')
-adjective
- Serene means
- On a day like this, when the ocean is so smooth and **serene**, it is hard to imagine that it can be rough and stormy.
 - Shaking and upset after her accident, Jolene sat very still and had a cup of tea to try to make herself feel **serene** again.
 - a. quiet and at peace.
 - b. anxious.
 - c. angry.

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. _____ A fact or event that can be observed
2. _____ To bring on
3. _____ Changeable; acting on impulses; unpredictable
4. _____ To remedy; make right
5. _____ A lack of agreement, as between facts; an inconsistency
6. _____ Emotional release
7. _____ Peaceful; calm
8. _____ Lasting for only a short time; fleeting
9. _____ To take back
10. _____ Determination

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

➤ Sentence Check 1

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

a. capricious	b. catharsis	c. discrepancy	d. ephemeral	e. induce
f. phenomenon	g. rectify	h. resolution	i. retract	j. serene

- _____ 1. When a pregnant woman has gone past her due date, her doctors sometimes give her medication to ___ labor—in other words, to cause the baby to be born.
- _____ 2. “I feel bad about what happened, and I’d like to ___ it,” said our neighbor. “How much will it cost to fix the window my kids broke with their baseball?”
- _____ 3. After a rough day at work, what makes you feel ___ again? For some people, the answer is a brisk walk; others prefer a hot bath or a brief nap.
- _____ 4. When Leonard gets his monthly bank statement, there is usually a(n) ___ between it and his own records. The gap isn’t large—just five or ten dollars—but it’s almost always there.
- _____ 5. After years of holding back her anger at her father, Mimi achieved ___ by writing him a long, furious letter—and then burning it.
- _____ 6. An old French song describes the joys of love as ___, but the sorrows of love as lasting a lifetime.
- _____ 7. “I said I would marry you,” Marie told Hank. “But now that I know how you’ve lied to me, I ___ that promise.”
- _____ 8. Superstitions are a puzzling ___. What is it that makes otherwise well-informed and sensible people step aside to avoid walking under a ladder?
- _____ 9. Having decided that TV was taking up too much of her life, Angie made a(n) ___ not to watch it for a week.
- _____ 10. Tina seems to take pleasure in being ___. One day she says she loves school; the next day she says she hates it. On Tuesday she decides that she likes being single; on Wednesday she’s upset that she’s not married.

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. To escape the stress and turbulence^o of city life, my parents retired to a quiet, ___ small town. Now they say nothing would ___ them to leave that placid^o spot.
- _____ 3–4. Her next-door neighbor’s cold, unfriendly attitude was a puzzling ___ to Lucy. She made a(n) ___ to ask him directly if she had somehow offended him.

- _____ 5-6. The heat in our apartment building is ____: we're either too hot or too cold. The owner is afraid that only an expensive new boiler can ____ the situation.
- _____ 7-8. People who have a "near-death" experience often describe it as a(n) ____ that leaves them feeling purified. But the effect can be ____: it soon fades, and they return to their old ways of life.
- _____ 9-10. I hated to ____ my promise to buy the kids new bicycles, but there was a large ____ between what the bikes cost and what I could afford to pay.

► Final Check: New Year's Resolutions

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.

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead (to quote Sir Walter Scott), who never to himself has said, *This year I resolve to . . .*? Probably not. Every year, everyone seems to make at least one New Year's (1) _____. It's a recurring (2) ____: no matter how little success we've had in quitting smoking or getting more exercise in the months just past, we still believe we'll do it now. We have a touching faith that expressing our determination will somehow (3) _____ us to be better, will lead us to (4) _____ whatever is wrong with our lives. And perhaps making these promises also serves as a(n) (5) ____: we feel cleaner and purer, (6) _____ and at peace with the world.

However, we seem to overlook a few incontrovertible^o facts. For one thing, most New Year's vows prove to be (7) _____. It's amazing how soon we forget them and return to our former depravity^o. This may be because so many of them are (8) ____: we make a whimsical^o or quixotic^o promise on the spur of the moment without thinking, "Can I really do this?" or even "Do I really want to do this?" Thus (if we consider the matter at all), we will usually see a huge (9) _____ between our goals and what we actually achieve. Interestingly, though, no one ever seems to (10) _____ a resolution. You've probably never said, "No, I take it back. I won't lose ten pounds this year." And although time after time, our New Year's goals turn out to be elusive^o, we keep on setting them.

This year, I resolve to read some Scott, instead of just quoting him.

Scores	Sentence Check 2 _____%	Final Check _____%
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