

CHAPTER  
26

abstemious  
abstruse  
astute  
aversion  
diminutive

eclectic  
extraneous  
hardy  
intractable  
soporific

### 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 **abstemious**  
(āb-stē'mē-əs)  
-adjective

*Abstemious* means

- Although I may enjoy eating a pint of cookie-dough ice cream, I know I look and feel better when I am more **abstemious**.
  - We say that an **abstemious** person who eats very little "eats like a bird," but in fact birds eat almost all the time.
- a. self-indulgent.    b. moderate in eating and drinking.    c. sophisticated.

2 **abstruse**  
(āb-strōōs'  
-adjective

*Abstruse* means

- The scholarship winner is so bright that as a high school freshman, she was already taking university-level courses in **abstruse** subjects.
  - The Swedish art film was too **abstruse** for me—it was full of symbols and references that I couldn't understand.
- a. hard to comprehend.    b. absurd.    c. elementary.

3 **astute**  
(ə-stōōt'  
-adjective

*Astute* means

- How kind of you to give me a sweater, and how **astute** of you to have noticed that sea-green is my favorite color!
  - If you were a little more **astute**, you would have noticed that Betsy and Dave are not getting along well—they didn't say a word to each other all during dinner.
- a. surprised.    b. shrewdly observant.    c. courageous.

4 **aversion**  
(ə-vūr'zhən)  
-noun

*Aversion to* means

- Dad has such an **aversion** to answering machines that he hangs up as soon as he hears a recorded message.
  - Denise has an **aversion** to dresses and skirts. She wears only pants.
- a. a strong distaste for.    b. a strong preference for.    c. a knowledge of.

5 **diminutive**  
(dī-mīn'yə-tīv)  
-adjective

— *Diminutive* means

- Tory's income last year seemed so **diminutive** that he assumed he wouldn't have to pay taxes. He was wrong.
  - When I saw a display of eighteenth-century costumes at the museum, I was surprised at their small size. Our ancestors must have been **diminutive** people!
- a. impossible to measure.    b. sizable.    c. little.

6 **eclectic**  
(ī-klēk'tīk)  
-adjective

— *Eclectic* means

- "We're having an **eclectic** dinner tonight," Kris announced; "first wonton soup, then Swedish meatballs, and then Pennsylvania Dutch shoofly pie for dessert!"
  - The concert program was **eclectic**: the songs came from America, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Japan; and they included musical comedy, grand opera, and children's songs.
- a. lacking in diversity.    b. varied.    c. lengthy.

7 **extraneous**  
(ĭk-strā'nē-əs)  
-adjective

*Extraneous* means

- If you want to tell a joke well, do not include a lot of **extraneous** remarks, such as, "OK, here comes the funny part," or "Wait, I didn't tell that part right."
- On the old TV show *Dragnet*, the detective, Sergeant Joe Friday, was constantly saying, "Just the facts, ma'am," to prevent witnesses from wasting his time with **extraneous** comments and ideas.
  - a. unrelated.
  - b. excellent.
  - c. important.

8 **hardy**  
(hār'dē)  
-adjective

*Hardy* means

- Although they are small, Shetland ponies are **hardy**, able to survive the long cold winters of their native Shetland Islands.
- Farm children had to be **hardy**; they were expected to work long hours in the fields.
  - a. healthy and sturdy.
  - b. delicate.
  - c. hardhearted.

9 **intractable**  
(ĭn-trāk'tə-bəl)  
-adjective

*Intractable* means

- Doria came home from her job at the day-care center looking worn out. "The kids were really **intractable** today," she said. "We just couldn't get them to calm down and behave."
- Mules are notoriously **intractable**. You've probably heard the expression, "As stubborn as a mule."
  - a. unclassifiable.
  - b. uncontrollable.
  - c. unrecognizable.

10 **soporific**  
(sōp'ə-rĭf'ĭk)  
-adjective

*Soporific* means

- If you're having trouble sleeping, try a glass of warm milk, which is supposed to have a **soporific** effect.
- Jill plays tapes of soft, dreamy music in her baby's room at nap time. She hopes it will have a **soporific** effect.
  - a. causing anger.
  - b. causing excitement.
  - c. causing drowsiness.

### 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. \_\_\_\_\_ Difficult to understand; deep
2. \_\_\_\_\_ An intense dislike
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Coming from many sources
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Not essential; irrelevant
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Clever; perceptive
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Causing sleep
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Tough; strong
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Self-denying
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Difficult to manage; hard to control; unruly
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Much smaller than the average

**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. abstemious	b. abstruse	c. astute	d. aversion	e. diminutive
f. eclectic	g. extraneous	h. hardy	i. intractable	j. soporific

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Many birds fly south in the winter, but some \_\_\_ species, such as cardinals and chickadees, stay to add color and life to the cold northern landscape.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. At first, our puppy seemed \_\_\_; we couldn't teach him to obey. But a professional trainer showed us how to control him using praise and rewards.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Rosa used to love olives, but once she ate so many of them that she got sick. Since then, she has had a real \_\_\_ to them—she can't even stand to look at one.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. When there's a death in the family, don't try to hide it from the children. Even very young children can be \_\_\_ enough to see that something is wrong.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Grandmother was a(n) \_\_\_ woman, not even five feet tall, but she had the strength of a much larger person.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I feel sorry for our pastor; he wants his sermons to inspire people, but they are so long and boring that they have a(n) \_\_\_ effect instead.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. "You need to edit your report," Professor Hawkins told the student. "You've got some good, useful information here, but it's buried under paragraphs of \_\_\_ data."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Please be \_\_\_ in your use of Scotch tape—we've got only one roll to wrap all these presents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Trying to impress his intelligent new girlfriend, Al pretended to be reading books on \_\_\_ subjects such as quantum physics and chaos theory.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Joel is a great dinner guest because his interests are so \_\_\_; no matter what the topic is, he can talk about it intelligently and amusingly.

*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. Vaughn is a(n) \_\_\_ man who has a(n) \_\_\_ to any kind of excess: he doesn't smoke or drink, he never overeats, and he limits his spending.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3-4. The \_\_\_ chapter in the chemistry text had a(n) \_\_\_ effect on Yasmine. As she tried to peruse° the difficult material, she had to struggle to stay awake.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5-6. Mildew is a very \_\_\_ form of life. In damp weather, this fungus can start to grow on shower curtains and walls and soon becomes \_\_\_; it's almost impossible to control.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 7-8. A bonsai is a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ tree that is made tiny by special cultivation. When her parents got one, three-year-old Lani was \_\_\_\_\_ enough to see where it belonged: she put it by the front porch of her dollhouse.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9-10. The readings in the course were \_\_\_\_\_; old and new, from many cultures, by women and men. But they were all on one theme—growing up— with no peripheral<sup>o</sup> or \_\_\_\_\_ topics.

### ► Final Check: Weird Facts

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.

- “The world is so full of a number of things, I’m sure we should all be as happy as kings.” These lines were written by the poet Robert Louis Stevenson more than a hundred years ago. The world *is* full of a number of things, many of them strange, some of them wonderful, some funny, some nearly unbelievable. Some are basic to everyone’s education; others are (1) \_\_\_\_\_ but still fun to know. Here is a(n) (2) \_\_\_\_\_ collection of facts, taken from fields including science, psychology, and just plain silliness:
- Albert Einstein was known as one of the most discerning<sup>o</sup>; (3) \_\_\_\_\_ thinkers of all time. He had a remarkable understanding of such (4) \_\_\_\_\_ topics as time and space. Yet when Einstein was nine years old, he still couldn’t speak fluently. His parents thought he might be retarded.
  - If you’re going into an area where there are lots of mosquitoes, be (5) \_\_\_\_\_ about eating bananas. Assiduous<sup>o</sup> research has found that mosquitoes are attracted to people who have recently eaten this fruit.
  - You probably know already that the penguin must be a(n) (6) \_\_\_\_\_ bird to survive in the fierce cold of Antarctica. Did you know, though, that a penguin can jump six feet in the air?
  - Donald Duck comics were banned in Finland because Donald doesn’t wear pants.
  - In the movie *E.T.: The Extraterrestrial*, the sound of E.T. walking was made by a woman squishing her hands in Jello.
  - The famous psychiatrist Sigmund Freud had such an (7) \_\_\_\_\_ to ferns that he could not stay in the same room with a fern.
  - There are more plastic flamingos in America than real ones.
  - When opossums “play possum,” they are not actually playing. Oddly enough, terror has a(n) (8) \_\_\_\_\_ effect on possums. Fright makes them go to sleep.
  - A duck’s quack does not echo. No one knows why.
  - Mosquitoes have teeth. Since mosquitoes are so tiny, imagine how (9) \_\_\_\_\_ their teeth must be!
  - Snakes are occasionally born with two heads. Such a two-headed snake is extremely (10) \_\_\_\_\_. Not only is it pugnacious<sup>o</sup> with other animals, but its two heads fight each other for food.
  - Thomas Edison was afraid of the dark. (Do you suppose that’s why he invented the light bulb?)

Scores Sentence Check 2 \_\_\_\_\_ % Final Check \_\_\_\_\_ %

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