



CHAPTER
29

ambivalence
anomaly
biased
credulous
despot

incipient
nefarious
prodigious
servile
temper

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 **ambivalence**
(ām-bīv'ə-ləns)
-noun

Ambivalence means

- Rita and Phil have broken their engagement three times now. If they feel such **ambivalence** about getting married, why do you think they stay together?
 - Many people approach a job change with **ambivalence**. They want a new job to provide them with new challenges and rewards, but they dislike giving up the security of the old job.
- a. conflicting attitudes. b. ambition. c. ignorance.

2 **anomaly**
(ə-nŏm'ə-lē)
-noun

Anomaly means

- Elaine's poor score on the math test was an **anomaly**; she usually does very well in math.
 - A colored diamond is an **anomaly**; most diamonds are colorless or bluish-white.
- a. an annoyance. b. a source of anxiety. c. an abnormality.

3 **biased**
(bī'əst)
-adjective

Biased means

- Studies show that names influence how we react to other people. For instance, a group of teenaged boys expected that any girl named "Michelle" would be attractive, while they were **biased** against anyone named "Hulga."
 - Every human group seems to be **biased** against some other group. For example, the French tell jokes about the Belgians, and people in Quebec make fun of people from Newfoundland.
- a. thinking well of. b. having a preconceived opinion. c. having no opinion.

4 **credulous**
(krēj'ə-ləs)
-adjective

Credulous means

- Marya reads her horoscope every day but insists that she's not **credulous**. "It's just for fun," she says. "I never take it seriously."
 - **Credulous** Dave believed his girlfriend when she told him she was an actress. In fact, the only part she ever had was in a health play in third grade, as a radish.
- a. too trustful. b. too skeptical. c. not paying attention.

5 **despot**
(dēs'pət)
-noun

Despot means

- During the American Revolution, the English king, George III, was seen as an unjust **despot**, but history has dealt more kindly with him in recent years.
 - Some parents are harsh **despots** who make their children obey their every command, while others are lenient and easygoing.
- a. an elected official. b. an oppressive ruler. c. a revolutionary.

6 **incipient**
(īn-sīp'ē-ənt)
-adjective

Incipient means

- Are Bill and Lisa just friends, or is there an **incipient** romance developing?
 - "Precancerous" cells are an **incipient** tumor—a cancer that may be starting to develop.
- a. coming to an end. b. coming into existence. c. fully grown.

7 **nefarious**
(nə-fār'ē-əs)
-adjective

Nefarious means

- The name of Jack the Ripper, whose **nefarious** murders shocked nineteenth-century England, has become almost a synonym for a brutal killer.
- The movie, about a **nefarious** plot by terrorists to kidnap a bus full of school-children, had us on the edge of our seats.
 - praiseworthy.
 - amusing.
 - evil.

8 **prodigious**
(prə-dij'əs)
-adjective

Prodigious means

- This week the lottery prize is a **prodigious** amount of money—almost a hundred million dollars.
- It takes a **prodigious** supply of patience to put together a 5,000-piece jigsaw puzzle.
 - huge.
 - unknown.
 - small.

9 **servile**
(sūr'vīl or
sūr'vəl)
-adjective

Servile means

- In the play, George portrayed a fawning, **servile** hotel clerk who would do anything to please the hotel's clients.
- The spoiled celebrity likes to surround herself with **servile** people who do whatever she wants and constantly tell her how fabulous she is.
 - bossy.
 - acting like a slave.
 - powerful.

10 **temper**
(tēm'pēr)
-verb

Temper means

- "Temper justice with mercy"—a phrase from Milton's *Paradise Lost*—suggests that we need to combine being just with being merciful.
- There is a saying, "God **tempers** the wind to the shorn lamb," which suggests that God does not send the weak more than they can bear.
 - to reinforce.
 - to tone down.
 - to continue.

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.

- _____ Prejudiced
- _____ Mixed feelings; uncertainty; indecisiveness
- _____ Beginning; early
- _____ Humbly obedient
- _____ To reduce in intensity, especially by mixing in some other quality; moderate; soften
- _____ A tyrant
- _____ Enormous
- _____ Very wicked; villainous
- _____ Tending to believe too readily; easily convinced
- _____ Something different, odd, or peculiar

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 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. ambivalence	b. anomaly	c. biased	d. credulous	e. despot
f. incipient	g. nefarious	h. prodigious	i. servile	j. temper

- _____ 1. Sandra is very funny, but she needs to ___ her humor with kindness—sometimes her jokes can hurt others.
- _____ 2. Amy feels some ___ about spending the holidays alone in her new apartment. On the one hand, she thinks celebrating there will make her new place feel more like home. On the other hand, she will miss her family.
- _____ 3. There are two kinds of waiters I dislike: the one who jokes with me and the one who is overly humble and ___.
- _____ 4. On our campus, almost everyone drives a battered second-hand car. Cecil's shiny new sports car is a real ___.
- _____ 5. Jen takes an aspirin at the first sign of a(n) ___ headache. Marsha, by contrast, resists taking medicine even when she's really sick.
- _____ 6. It's silly to be ___ against all red-haired people just because you had one bad date with a redhead.
- _____ 7. The thriller was the kind of book you can't put down—it traced a(n) ___ plan by a mad scientist to turn his neighbors into zombies.
- _____ 8. "Sorry," said Professor Chiu. "I am not ___ enough to believe that aliens from a flying saucer flew away with your term paper."
- _____ 9. Shelley's famous poem "Ozymandias" is about a cruel ___ whose kingdom has vanished in the desert sands.
- _____ 10. Thomas Jefferson was a man of ___ talent. Not only was he president of the United States, but he was also an inventor, a writer, and an architect.

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. The people's attitude toward the ___ who ruled them was one of ____.
They hated him for his cruelty but admired him for making the nation rich and powerful.
- _____ 3-4. Uriah Heep is a famous character created by the novelist Charles Dickens. The evil Heep conceals his ___ plans by acting very ____: he constantly describes himself as "humble."

- _____ 5-6. The report was _____; the authors included only the evidence supporting their theory and left out the contrary evidence. But although it was spurious°, _____ people simply accepted it without examining the facts.
- _____ 7-8. The term "child prodigy" describes a(n) _____: a rare instance of _____ knowledge, talent, or skill in someone who is still very young.
- _____ 9-10. People are always looking for ways to _____ the effects of a(n) _____ cold. Some swear by certain vitamins and herbs to keep the cold from getting worse.

➤ Final Check: Scientific Discoveries

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.

Students in a biology class were arguing about some recent developments in science and what they might mean to the world.

"I love science, so I am (1) _____ in favor of scientific discoveries. I tend to think they are laudable° and wonderful," said Ms. Kirschfeld, the teacher. "But even I feel some (2) _____ about certain discoveries and how they might be used. For instance, cloning. Scientists have been able to clone animals that are exact copies of other animals. There is a(n) (3) _____ amount of research going on in related fields. What are some results that such developments could engender°?"

"Cloning scares me," said Eileen. "Imagine some evil (4) _____ who wants a country full of people who will do exactly what he wants. He could clone a population of (5) _____ citizens who obeyed his every command."

"But cloning is just one part of a field that is full of wonderful discoveries," said Todd. "Every day, scientists are learning more about how they can eliminate certain diseases and disorders, like Down syndrome or sickle-cell anemia, which are caused by a(n) (6) _____ in the genes. And other (7) _____ breakthroughs are on the way. Imagine a person who is badly burned and needs a skin graft, or someone who needs a heart transplant. Someday, scientists might be able to grow skin or a heart from the person's own genetic material."

"Don't be so (8) _____," Brad said. "You have too much faith that any discovery will be put only to good use. Evil people often have (9) _____ plans for new discoveries. As Eileen said, some nut could decide to produce an army of submissive° people who would do anything he wanted."

"Clearly, these discoveries have good and bad possibilities," said Ms. Kirschfeld. "Let's hope that scientists will (10) _____ their fervor° about what they are learning with caution about what use will be made of it."

Scores	Sentence Check 2 _____ %	Final Check _____ %
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Enter your scores above and in the vocabulary performance chart on the next page.