

CHAPTER
4

brevity
clemency
frivolous
heist
lampoon

querulous
reproach
respite
torpor
unscathed

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 **brevity**
(brĕv'ĭ-tē)
-noun

__ Brevity means

- Everyone was surprised by the **brevity** of the principal's speech at graduation. He spoke for less than five minutes.
 - President Calvin Coolidge was famous for the **brevity** of his remarks. When a woman told him, "I have a bet that I can get you to say three words to me!" his response was, "You lose."
- a. strength. b. intelligence. c. briefness.

2 **clemency**
(klĕm'ən-sē)
-noun

__ Clemency means

- A good teacher knows when to show **clemency**. For instance, if a student has been working very hard but does poorly on one quiz, the teacher might offer not to count that score.
 - The convicted murderer was executed, even though religious leaders around the world asked the court to show **clemency** and reduce his sentence to life in prison.
- a. mercy. b. haste. c. strength.

3 **frivolous**
(frĭv'ə-ləs)
-adjective

__ Frivolous means

- Do you feel like seeing a serious movie, or something more **frivolous**?
 - One moment we were laughing over some ridiculous joke, but then the news of our friend's injury put an end to our **frivolous** mood.
- a. lighthearted. b. cold-hearted. c. brokenhearted.

4 **heist**
(hĭst)
-noun

__ Heist means

- The house was unlocked, empty, and full of wedding presents—a perfect target for a **heist**.
 - The action movie was about the attempted **heist** of a famous painting, Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa."
- a. a purchase. b. an imitation. c. a burglary.

5 **lampoon**
(lăm-pōon')
-verb

__ Lampoon means

- Someone in our office **lampooned** all our paperwork by circulating a six-page form to be submitted, in triplicate, by anyone who wanted a pencil. Several humorless employees actually filled it out.
 - *Forbidden Broadway* is a comedy show consisting of takeoffs on plays running in New York. Each theater season it **lampoons** a new crop of victims.
- a. to summarize. b. to make fun of. c. to praise.

6 **querulous**
(kwĕr'ə-ləs)
-adjective

Querulous means

- People who work in the "Complaints" department of a store must get used to dealing with lots of **querulous** customers.
 - The spoiled little boy looked at his pile of birthday presents and said in a **querulous** voice, "None of them are very big, are they?"
- a. shaky. b. dishonest. c. discontented.

- 7 **reproach**
(rĭ-prōch')
-noun
- The kids deserve a **reproach** for making such a mess of the house while their parents were away.
 - During the campaign, both candidates drew a **reproach** from the newspapers for making untruthful statements and generally behaving very badly.
- *Reproach* means
- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. an expression of thanks. | b. an expression of disapproval. | c. an expression of respect. |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
- 8 **respite**
(rēs'pīt)
-noun
- Emergency-room doctors work long shifts. Their only **respite** is a short nap on a couch.
 - Twice a week, a nurse spends an afternoon at the Hendersons' house, so that Mrs. Henderson can have a **respite** from caring for her sick husband.
- *Respite* means
- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| a. time off. | b. a salary. | c. a mark of respect. |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|
- 9 **torpor**
(tôr'pər)
-noun
- When Dermot took a midwinter vacation in Florida, the unaccustomed heat drained his energy. His **torpor** was so overwhelming that all he wanted to do was lie in a hammock.
 - The sleepy little town seemed to doze peacefully through the summer afternoon. It looked as if nothing could rouse it from its **torpor**.
- *Torpor* means
- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| a. hostility. | b. curiosity. | c. drowsiness. |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|
- 10 **unscathed**
(ŭn-skāthd')
-adjective
- "Thanks to my seat belt," said Frankie, "I was able to walk away from the collision **unscathed**. Without it, I would probably have been badly injured."
 - When her husband left her, Mimi lamented, "I wish I could say that this has left me **unscathed**. But the truth is that I've been deeply wounded."
- *Unscathed* means
- | | | |
|------------------|-----------|------------|
| a. strengthened. | b. angry. | c. unhurt. |
|------------------|-----------|------------|

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.

- _____ Complaining; whining
- _____ To attack or ridicule through humorous imitation
- _____ Blame; a rebuke
- _____ Briefness; shortness of duration
- _____ A state of mental or physical inactivity; sluggishness
- _____ A theft
- _____ Not sensible; not properly serious; silly
- _____ Mercy in judging; leniency
- _____ Not harmed or injured
- _____ A short period of rest or relief; time out

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. brevity	b. clemency	c. frivolous	d. heist	e. lampoon
f. querulous	g. reproach	h. respite	i. torpor	j. unscathed

- _____ 1. Feeling _____ on a sunny Saturday morning, I treated myself to a manicure rather than doing the housework that was waiting for me.
- _____ 2. The police believe at least three people were involved in the jewelry-store _____: one to be a lookout, one to do the actual stealing, and one to drive the getaway car.
- _____ 3. Since the shoplifting incident was James's first such offense, the court showed _____ and only fined him rather than sending him to jail.
- _____ 4. Professor Mazzeo's lectures are noted for their _____. He frequently finishes speaking before even half the hour is up.
- _____ 5. Although Mr. Hackman frequently says, "I don't like to complain," his conversation is full of _____ comments about all the things that upset him.
- _____ 6. After a snake eats, it generally falls into a state of _____ for a day or more, barely moving or even breathing.
- _____ 7. Our cat fell out of an attic window but walked away _____.
- _____ 8. Some very funny movies are takeoffs on certain types of serious movies. For instance, *Airplane* _____s disaster movies, while *Love at First Bite* makes fun of vampire films.
- _____ 9. I spend Thursday mornings at my sister's house, giving her some _____ from her very active two-year-old twins.
- _____ 10. Sheila is a very forgiving person. Although she had every right to be angry at me for what I did, she accepted my apology without a word of _____.

NOTE: Now check your answers to these questions by turning to page 175. 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. Political cartoons _____ public figures, but this mockery is not _____; rather than being merely funny, it is meant to reveal and comment on social problems and wrongdoing.
- _____ 3-4. Caring for a loved one during a long illness does not leave even an exemplary° caregiver _____. In fact, "burnout" is very likely if the caregiver does not have a(n) _____ from time to time.
- _____ 5-6. According to Shakespeare, "_____ is the soul of wit." If so, the one-line joke is beyond _____, since it could hardly be briefer.

- _____ 7-8. The thief who was responsible for the _____ pleaded for _____, claiming that he was a modern-day Robin Hood. "I steal from the rich and give to the poor," he said.
- _____ 9-10. Champagne makes many people sleepy. But others, rather than being overcome by _____, feel irritable and _____ after drinking it.

► Final Check: Loony but True

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.

One reason why people watch TV and movies is to laugh at fictional characters and the goofy things they do. But guess what, folks—real people are every bit as silly, and just as easy to (1)_____. Here are some stories from the files of "Incredible but True . . ."

An insolvent^o homeless man walked into a bank in Michigan and asked a teller for fifty cents. She didn't understand what he'd said and thought he was trying to rob her. So she handed over all the cash in her drawer—about \$1,300. He thanked her and left. When the police caught up with the man, they didn't charge him with a crime. They had to show (2)_____, they said, because he hadn't done anything illegal or surreptitious^o—he had just openly asked for money.

A real bank robber was captured within a few minutes of his (3)_____. The (4)_____ of his freedom was easily explained. He had written his holdup note on the back of his own pay stub, complete with his name and address. When he got home, the cops were already there, waiting for him.

When police in Florida noticed a car weaving in and out of its lane, they pulled it over. Imagine their surprise when they found a three-and-a-half-foot-long iguana at the wheel. The large lizard was sitting on the lap of its sleeping owner, who was taking a short (5)_____ from driving. Fortunately, he and the lizard were both (6)_____; of the two, however, the lizard made out better. It got a nice new home, while the man went to jail for drunk driving. The judge didn't pay much attention to the man's (7)_____ complaint that it was the iguana who had actually been driving.

A fishing ship in the Sea of Japan sank, and its crew claimed it had been struck by a cow that fell out of the sky. Everyone assumed that the sailors had made up this (8)_____ story to escape (9)_____ for some mistake of their own. But then the crew of a Russian cargo plane admitted they had stolen a cow they'd found wandering on an airfield and put it aboard the plane. Now, cows are generally extremely calm animals. But cruising at 30,000 feet shook even a calm cow out of her usual (10)_____. The terrified animal panicked, dived out of the plane, and, well, there was the ship. . . .

Scores	Sentence Check 2 _____ %	Final Check _____ %
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Enter your scores above and in the vocabulary performance chart on the inside back cover of the book.