



affable
apocryphal
desultory
garbled
irascible

loquacious
obtuse
opaque
paucity
recapitulate

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 **affable**
(ăf'ə-bəl)
-adjective
- ffable* means
- Dobermans and pit bulls are often thought of as unfriendly dogs, while golden retrievers and Labradors are seen as **affable**.
 - I wish my new boss were more **affable**. She seems so stern that I'm afraid to ask her a question when I don't understand something.
- a. bad-tempered. b. good-natured. c. intelligent.
- 2 **apocryphal**
(ə-pŏk'rə-fəl)
-adjective
- apocryphal* means
- A hero of American folklore is the giant lumberjack Paul Bunyan, whose footprints supposedly formed the Great Lakes. Clearly, this story is **apocryphal**.
 - There is a story in our family that my great-great-grandfather was a train robber, but I think the story is probably **apocryphal**.
- a. fictitious. b. difficult to understand. c. true.
- 3 **desultory**
(dēs'əl-tŏr'ē)
-adjective
- desultory* means
- When the shoe repair shop lost my boots, the clerk's search was so **desultory** and disorganized that I had to go through the shelves and find them myself.
 - Darrin went to the emergency room with a severe stomachache, but the doctor on duty gave him only a quick, **desultory** examination and sent him home.
- a. fake. b. random. c. intensive.
- 4 **garbled**
(gär'bæld)
-adjective
- Garbled* means
- When Tim printed his essay, a computer error made it come out **garbled**. Only meaningless symbols and numbers appeared on the page.
 - The children played a game in which each one whispered a message to the next child in line. The first child whispered, "My favorite color is purple," but the message the last child heard was **garbled**: "You shouldn't holler at your uncle."
- a. lengthy. b. shortened. c. distorted.
- 5 **irascible**
(ī-rās'ə-bəl)
-adjective
- irascible* means
- "The holidays are supposed to be a happy time," sighed Martine. "But with all the extra work and guests, I find myself becoming **irascible**—I'm a real grouch."
 - "I know my patients are improving when they become grumpy," said Dr. Imiri. "An **irascible** patient is on the road to recovery."
- a. bad-tempered. b. nervous. c. depressed.
- 6 **loquacious**
(lŏ-kwā'shəs)
-adjective
- Loquacious* means
- Kyle, who prefers to sleep or read on a long plane trip, says it never fails: he always ends up with a **loquacious** seat companion who wants to chat nonstop.
 - The English have an amusing phrase for **loquacious** people: they say that such a person can "talk the hind leg off a donkey."
- a. talking too much. b. aggressive. c. irritable.

- 7 **obtuse**
(*ōb-tōōs'*)
-adjective
- *Obtuse* means
- Harvey started to tell an offensive joke at the office holiday lunch. I kicked him under the table, hoping to shut him up, but he was too **obtuse** to get the message.
 - Children can be remarkably **obtuse** about understanding school subjects like math, but their wits sharpen amazingly when they're learning a new video game.
- a. angry. b. dimwitted. c. thoughtful.
- 8 **opaque**
(*ō-pāk'*)
-adjective
- Opaque* means
- We attempted to follow the movie's complex plot, but the characters' motives and reactions remained **opaque**. We finally gave up trying to understand it.
 - Articles on Einstein's theory of relativity usually start reassuringly, noting that there is no reason why it should be **opaque** to the ordinary reader. Then they proceed to make it even murkier.
- a. fascinating. b. difficult to understand. c. improbable.
- 9 **paucity**
(*pō'sī-tē*)
-noun
- Paucity* means
- The speaker's high-flown language could not conceal his **paucity** of ideas. He had nothing meaningful to say.
 - Serena wanted to get away from her small town because of its **paucity** of intellectual life. It didn't even have a library or a bookstore.
- a. repetition. b. conflict. c. lack.
- 10 **recapitulate**
(*rē-kə-pīch' ə-lāt'*)
-verb
- Recapitulate* means
- "To **recapitulate** what we told you on the phone," said Ms. Brown to the baby sitter, "we'll be home at eleven o'clock, and you can reach us at the Athens Café."
 - Before an exam, Professor Martin always has a review session in which she **recapitulates** some of the most important material the class has studied.
- a. to sum up. b. to ignore. c. to contradict.

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. _____ Of doubtful authenticity; not genuine
2. _____ Moving from one thing to another in an unplanned way
3. _____ Very talkative
4. _____ Friendly; easy to get along with
5. _____ Easily angered; irritable
6. _____ Difficult to understand or explain; obscure; incomprehensible
7. _____ To summarize or repeat briefly
8. _____ Slow to understand; dull
9. _____ A scarcity; an insufficiency
10. _____ Mixed up to such an extent as to be misleading or incomprehensible

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. affable | b. apocryphal | c. desultory | d. garbled | e. irascible |
| f. loquacious | g. obtuse | h. opaque | i. paucity | j. recapitulate |

- _____ 1. Many Spanish explorers in the 1700s lost their lives searching for the "fountain of youth."
- _____ 2. After a stroke, some people partially lose their ability to speak. Until they recover, their words come out _____ and unclear.
- _____ 3. People often become _____ after they've had too much to drink. Unfortunately, not only do they talk too much, but what they say doesn't make much sense.
- _____ 4. The words of the poem sounded lovely, but their meaning was _____. In fact, they seemed to mean nothing at all.
- _____ 5. Although Ms. Henderson is a(n) _____ instructor, don't let her good nature make you think that she's a pushover. She's nice and friendly, but she's also a demanding teacher.
- _____ 6. Tom always seems to have a chip on his shoulder, and he gets angry over the slightest thing. I don't know what makes him so _____.
- _____ 7. Jon's paper was a(n) _____ effort. He started late and then just threw some disconnected notes together. No wonder he got a D.
- _____ 8. "We seem to have a(n) _____ of singers this year," said the chorus director. Only three students had shown up for the auditions.
- _____ 9. Before I left the office, my doctor _____(e)d her advice to me: "Get extra rest, drink plenty of fluids, and don't worry."
- _____ 10. "I've been hinting that my birthday would be a good time for Jeff to give me an engagement ring," Jan said, "but he seems completely _____. I don't think he gets the point."

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. Lara had heard that the famous pianist was _____ and brusque^o, but when she asked him for his autograph, he was very _____. He signed her program and gave her a charming smile.
- _____ 3-4. The lecture was _____, with the speaker hopping confusingly from one topic to another. At the end, when he said, "To _____ . . .," it was hard to imagine which of his unrelated, rambling points he might choose to

_____ 5-6. Stephen Hawking's study *A Brief History of Time* has become famous as the world's most widely unread best seller. That status may be _____, but the book really is _____ to people who aren't physicists.

_____ 7-8. When Anya's _____ husband talks too much, she tries to stop him by raising her eyebrows and clearing her throat, but he's often too _____ to take the hint.

_____ 9-10. The weather report on the radio was _____ by static. Was the announcer predicting a "_____" of rain, meaning none, or a "possibility" of rain, meaning we might get drenched?

► Final Check: A Formula for Teaching

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.

There is a famous formula for communicating ideas to people: *Step 1*—Tell them what you're going to tell them. *Step 2*—Tell them. *Step 3*—Tell them what you've told them. The formula is said to have been invented long ago by the Army. That story may be (1) _____, but it is probably authentic. The Army had to teach many things quickly to all kinds of fledgling^o recruits, and often it had a(n) (2) _____ of good instructors: too few teachers, with too little training. Moreover, the instructors were also of all kinds. Some were tough and (3) _____, with a quick temper and no patience for a learner who seemed slow or (4) _____. Others were (5) _____ and (6) _____, and although these good-natured, talkative men might teach well, they could also waste time on incidental^o matters or give confusing, (7) _____ instructions. The three-step formula would keep all teaching focused.

The formula is simple to use, and it is effective in writing as well as teaching. In step 1, you announce what you intend to say: how to disassemble and reassemble a rifle, how to apply for a job—whatever it is you want to communicate. In step 2, you say it. In step 3, you say it (briefly) again: you (8) _____ it as a summary and a reminder.

No formula is foolproof, but being cognizant^o of this one will definitely help you avoid planless, (9) _____ writing and writing that is unclear, equivocal^o, vague, or (10) _____. What worked for the Army can work for you.

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

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