

austere
esoteric
facsimile
grotesque
mesmerize

metamorphosis
notorious
perfunctory
provocative
travesty

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 **austere**
(ô-stîr')
-adjective

— *Austere* means

2 **esoteric**
(ës'ə-tër'ik)
-adjective

— *Esoteric* means

3 **facsimile**
(fäk-sim'ə-lē)
-noun

— *Facsimile* means

4 **grotesque**
(grō-těsk')
-adjective

— *Grotesque* means

5 **mesmerize**
(mëz'mə-rîz')
-verb

— *Mesmerize* means

6 **metamorphosis**
(mët'ə-môr'fē-sîs)
-noun

— *Metamorphosis* means

● Ms. Stone's appearance was **austere**. She wore plain, dark-colored clothing with no jewelry, and she never used makeup.

● The walls in Mario's den are white and nearly bare, and his white furniture has simple lines. This **austere** decor gives the room a pleasantly calm mood.
A. very ugly. B. very plain. C. very youthful.

● The instruction manuals that come with computer software often use such **esoteric** terms that they seem to be written in a foreign language.

● The poetry of Ezra Pound, filled with references to ancient Greek culture, is too **esoteric** for most readers.
A. difficult to understand. B. shallow. C. unfavorable.

● When a **facsimile** of an old Sears-Roebuck catalog was published recently, it became a bestseller. People enjoyed seeing what was for sale a century ago.

● The word *fax* is short for **facsimile**. With a fax machine, you can send a precise image of a document across the country electronically in seconds.
A. an original. B. a distorted version. C. an accurate copy.

● Most people found the movie character E.T. adorable, but I thought the little alien was **grotesque**, with its weird combination of babyish features and old, wrinkled skin.

● The clown made **grotesque** faces, squinting his eyes, pulling down the corners of his mouth, and sticking out his tongue.
A. strange-looking. B. hard to understand. C. charming.

● The intense eyes of the woman in the photograph **mesmerized** me. I couldn't take my eyes off the picture.

● When driving at night, you can become **mesmerized** by the lines on the road or by other cars' headlights or taillights. To avoid a hypnotic state, keep your eyes moving from front to side to rearview mirror.
A. to amuse. B. to fascinate. C. to distort.

● A caterpillar's transformation into a butterfly is a well-known example of **metamorphosis**.

● In Franz Kafka's famous story "The **Metamorphosis**," a man wakes up on his thirtieth birthday to discover that he has turned into an enormous insect.
A. a change in form. B. a disaster. C. a scientific theory.

7 notorious
(nō-tōr'ē-əs)
-adjective

— *Notorious* means

- Batman and Robin matched wits with the Joker and the Penguin, who were **notorious** for their evil deeds.
- The local diner is **notorious** for bitter coffee, soggy vegetables, limp salads, and mystery meat.
 - A. regarded negatively.
 - B. regarded with curiosity.
 - C. ignored.

8 perfunctory
(pər-fŭnk'tə-rē)
-adjective

— *Perfunctory* means

- The doctor's examination was **perfunctory**. He seemed to be just going through the motions without taking any interest in the patient.
- Most of the candidates were passionate on the subject of nuclear weapons, but one spoke in a very **perfunctory** way, apparently bored with the topic.
 - A. uninterested.
 - B. enthusiastic.
 - C. exaggerated.

9 provocative
(prō-vōk'ə-tīv)
-adjective

— *Provocative* means

- "A good essay is **provocative**," said our English instructor. "It gets the reader interested and attentive, starting with the very first paragraph."
- To arouse the viewers' curiosity, the television ad began with a **provocative** image: a spaceship landing on a baseball field, at home plate.
 - A. predictable.
 - B. difficult to understand.
 - C. attention-getting.

10 travesty
(trāv'is-tē)
-noun

— *Travesty* means

- The fraternity skit, a **travesty** of college life, exaggerated and ridiculed many campus activities.
- The musical-comedy version of *Hamlet* was a **travesty**. The critics and audience agreed that it made a mockery of Shakespeare's profound tragedy.
 - A. a joking, disrespectful imitation.
 - B. an exact copy.
 - C. a simple version.

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.

- _____ To hypnotize or fascinate; hold spellbound
- _____ A great or complete change; transformation
- _____ A crude, exaggerated, or ridiculous representation; mockery
- _____ Done only as a routine, with little care or interest; performed with no interest or enthusiasm
- _____ Known widely but unfavorably; having a bad reputation
- _____ Tending to arouse interest or curiosity
- _____ An exact copy or reproduction
- _____ Intended for or understood by only a certain group; beyond the understanding of most people
- _____ Without decoration or luxury; severely simple
- _____ Distorted or strikingly inconsistent in shape, appearance, or manner

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 provided, complete each item below with the correct word from the box. Use each word once.

A. austere

B. esoteric

C. facsimile

D. grotesque

E. mesmerize

F. metamorphosis

G. notorious

H. perfunctory

I. provocative

J. travesty

- _____ 1. The trial was a ___ of justice because several of the jurors had been bribed.
- _____ 2. King Henry VIII of England was ___ not only for getting married six times, but also for having two of his wives executed.
- _____ 3. To capture readers' attention, an author sometimes begins an article with a(n) ___ question, such as, "Which do you think is more dangerous, climbing stairs or parachuting out of an airplane?"
- _____ 4. In some modern paintings, human figures are distorted into such ___ shapes that it's hard to recognize facial features and body parts.
- _____ 5. Lining the music school's hallway are framed ___s of handwritten pages of music by great composers.
- _____ 6. Legal documents are usually worded in such ___ language that most people need a lawyer to translate the "legalese" into plain English.
- _____ 7. As I stood looking at the grandfather clock, I became ___(e)d by the shiny pendulum that swung back and forth, back and forth, back and forth.
- _____ 8. Usually the therapist showed great interest in her patients, but today she was too worried about her own family to give more than ___ responses.
- _____ 9. My sister's dormitory room is rather ___, with cement-block walls and bare floors, but she's made it less stark by hanging colorful posters and adding bright bedspreads and cushions.
- _____ 10. The magician David Copperfield does a trick called "___." One person is chained and locked in a box. When the box is opened, that person is gone, and someone else is chained there instead.

NOTE: Now check your answers to these items by turning to page 178. 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 provided, complete each item below with **two** words from the box. Use each word once.

_____ 1-2. The political cartoon showed the judge as a(n) ___ figure, with a huge belly and a gaping mouth. To me it's unfair—a ___ of journalistic ethics.

_____ 3-4. The cat burglar in the film, ___ for stealing expensive jewelry, committed all his robberies wearing a(n) ___ outfit: a black T-shirt, plain black pants, black shoes, and black gloves.

- 5–6. The novel has a(n) _____ opening scene, in which a young woman and her parrot sneak out of a house on a ladder. The novel goes on to _____ the reader with one spellbinding episode after another.
- 7–8. Former principals had made only _____ efforts to rid the school of drugs, but the new principal, supported by a mandate^o from the parents' association, attacked the problem head-on. As a result, the school has undergone a _____ from "hooked" to "clean."
- 9–10. At the jewelers' convention, _____s of several famous gems were on display. I enjoyed seeing them, but I didn't understand the accompanying _____ explanation of the technical methods used to produce the copies.

Final Check: A Costume Party

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.

On the afternoon of a friend's New Year's Eve costume party, I made only a(n) (1) _____ effort to put a costume together. Unenthusiastic about spending much time on this, I wanted to create something as simple and rudimentary^o as possible, even if the effect would be rather (2) _____. I decided on a ghost costume—just a plain sheet with eyeholes cut out. Since all my sheets are green, I had to be the ghost of a frog.

The party began for me with a (3) _____ encounter: the door was opened by Julia Roberts, smiling flirtatiously and clutching her Best Actress Oscar—or at least an excellent (4) _____ of it. Then, when I went inside, the first men I saw were two (5) _____ pirates, Blackbeard and Captain Hook. I listened in on their conversation, expecting to be (6) _____ (e)d by fascinating tales of cut-throat adventures; instead, I heard only the (7) _____ language of two math majors.

Giving up any hope of understanding their remarks, I looked around for my own friends. But their (8) _____ from ordinary people to famous or odd people was so complete that I couldn't recognize anyone. Most of the costumes were in good taste. One, though, struck me as a (9) _____: a person dressed as Abraham Lincoln—a President I venerate^o for his character and leadership—was wearing a bull's-eye target, in crude mockery of President Lincoln's assassination. Another person looked frighteningly (10) _____, with a mouth twisted to one side and three eyes, all of different sizes.

In the course of the evening, I also met Cleopatra, Shakespeare, and Snoopy, among others. I may never again spend time at a gathering replete^o with so many celebrities.



Scores

Sentence Check 2 _____ %

Final Check _____ %

Enter your scores above and in the Vocabulary Performance Chart on the inside back cover of the book.