



CHAPTER 29

adroit
constituent
contention
irreparable
pinnacle

platitude
promiscuous
repudiate
spontaneous
stigma

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 **adroit**
(ə-droit')
-adjective

— *Adroit* means

- Doris is **adroit** in any kind of discussion or debate. She's very skillful at getting others to see things her way.
- **Adroit** chess players can make it seem as if the opponent is winning, when in fact he or she is about to lose in another move or two.
 - A. impulsive.
 - B. expert.
 - C. not selective.

2 **constituent**
(kən-stitch'ōō-ənt)
-noun

— *Constituent* means

- Our senator genuinely wants to represent the citizens, so she makes serious efforts to find out how her **constituents** feel about important issues.
- Many of Councilman Hall's **constituents** live in poverty, so one way he helps those he represents is by working for programs to assist the poor.
 - A. someone represented.
 - B. someone who speaks well.
 - C. an officeholder.

3 **contention**
(kən-tēn'shən)
-noun

— *Contention* means

- The artist's **contention** is that he was born in Paris, but actually he was born in a small town in Missouri.
- John's **contention** was that smoking hadn't hurt his health, but right after making that statement, he had a fit of coughing that lasted ten minutes.
 - A. an attempt.
 - B. a realization.
 - C. a claim.

4 **irreparable**
(ir-rēp'ə-rə-bəl)
-adjective

— *Irreparable* means

- The damage to the vase is **irreparable**. It broke into so many pieces that it cannot possibly be put together again.
- LaTanya apologized to Fred for her angry words, but I'm afraid the harm to their friendship is **irreparable**.
 - A. untrue.
 - B. not able to be fixed.
 - C. unnatural.

5 **pinnacle**
(pīn'ə-kəl)
-noun

— *Pinnacle* means

- The rock singer seems to have reached the **pinnacle** of her career: she's at the height of her popularity, and her recordings are selling more than ever before.
- Robin felt that being elected class president was the **pinnacle** of her college years. Her parents, though, wish that she had thought of her "personal best" more in terms of academic achievement.
 - A. the highest point.
 - B. the starting point.
 - C. the end.

6 **platitude**
(plăt'ə-tōōd')
-noun

— *Platitude* means

- Some conversations are made up entirely of **platitudes**: "Good to see you." "We've got to get together sometime." "Well, take care."
- I made no response to the clerk's "Have a nice day." He meant well, but I'm tired of **platitudes** like that.
 - A. good advice.
 - B. an unoriginal comment.
 - C. a lie.

7 promiscuous

(prə-mis'kyō-əs)

-adjective

- In this age of HIV and AIDS, it's more important than ever for people to be choosy about sexual partners. Being **promiscuous** can have deadly consequences.
- When it comes to women, Erik and Harry are opposites. Erik dates one woman at a time and is serious about commitment, but Harry is totally **promiscuous**.

___ *Promiscuous* means

- A. faithful. B. unselective. C. rude.

8 repudiate

(rī-pyōō'dē-āt')

-verb

- The actor **repudiated** his biography, saying it had been written without his consent or cooperation and that it was filled with lies.
- After the millionaire died, several people showed up claiming to be his children and demanding a share of his estate, but his real family **repudiated** their claims.

___ *Repudiate* means

- A. to accept. B. to discuss. C. to reject.

9 spontaneous

(spōn-tā'nē-əs)

-adjective

- The key to good acting is to be so well prepared that all words and actions seem natural and **spontaneous**, not rehearsed.
- When I asked Shawn to the movies, I tried to make the invitation sound **spontaneous**, as if I'd just thought of it. I didn't want him to know that I'd been planning it, nervously, for days.

___ *Spontaneous* means

- A. unplanned. B. clever. C. irresistible.

10 stigma

(stīg'mə)

-noun

- In the past, seeing a psychiatrist might harm a person's reputation, but now there's little or no **stigma** attached to seeking help for psychological problems.
- For a long time, there was a **stigma** associated with divorce. Today, of course, divorce is so common that it's no longer considered a disgrace.

___ *Stigma* means

- A. dishonor. B. an insight. C. an argument.

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. _____ Not able to be repaired or made better
2. _____ Skillful and clever under challenging conditions
3. _____ A mark of shame or disgrace; blemish on character or reputation
4. _____ To deny the truth, validity, or authority of
5. _____ Occurring or done as a result of a natural feeling or impulse; not forced or planned
6. _____ Lacking standards of selection; having many sexual partners
7. _____ A peak of achievement; topmost point
8. _____ A member of a group represented by an elected official
9. _____ A remark that is commonplace or has become uninteresting through repeated use
10. _____ A claim that something is true; a declaration

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. adroit
F. platitude

B. constituent
G. promiscuous

C. contention
H. repudiate

D. irreparable
I. spontaneous

E. pinnacle
J. stigma

- _____ 1. Some animals are _____ in their breeding habits, mating freely with no apparent effort at selection.
- _____ 2. The painting was being auctioned off as an early work of a well-known artist—until the artist _____(e)d it, saying that she had never painted it at all.
- _____ 3. Eyeglasses have become so fashionable by now that there is no longer any _____ about wearing them.
- _____ 4. After the earthquake, some houses that were still standing nevertheless had to be completely destroyed; the damage to them was _____.
- _____ 5. Tisha is a(n) _____ sales representative; she can convince anyone on the phone, and she can get her foot in any door.
- _____ 6. Many people say that the plays of William Shakespeare—considered the greatest playwright who ever lived—represent the _____ of English drama.
- _____ 7. Our football game was _____; we had no plans to play, but then we found an old football as we walked across the field.
- _____ 8. When Galileo made the _____ that the sun, not the Earth, is the center of our planetary system, the Catholic Church forced him to deny what he knew to be true.
- _____ 9. Some elected representatives vote as the majority of their _____s wish, but others follow their own choice, even if it represents a minority opinion.
- _____ 10. When Jimmy tells me about his problems, I don't know what to say. I just mumble _____s like "That's too bad" or "Oh well, I'm sure you'll work it out."

NOTE: Now check your answers to these items by turning to page 179. 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.

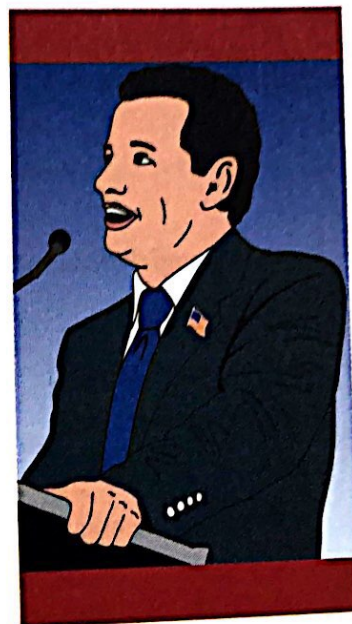
- _____ 1-2. Serving time in prison leaves a _____ that can do _____ harm to someone's ability to find a job. Ex-convicts who try to redeem^o themselves may find that any attempt to get honest work is impeded^o by their record.
- _____ 3-4. "No matter how often I hear Kevin's _____ that he loves me," Tammy said, "it always sounds perfunctory^o and insincere because he uses _____s."

- 5-6. Greta was so ___ at mechanical drawing in high school that I wasn't surprised to hear she'd reached the ___ of success as an architect.
- 7-8. Senator Harper's warm welcome to any of his ___s isn't just a sham°, meant to get votes; it's a(n) ___ expression of his genuine interest and inherent° good will.
- 9-10. The teacher ___(e)d the idea that most animals are by nature ___, going from mate to mate. She explained that animals such as wolves, whales, pigeons, and swans stay with one mate for life.

Final Check: The End of a Political Career

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.

Our mayor was not only a proficient° politician but also an extremely (1) _____ speechmaker. Great warmth and charm emanated° from him. Whenever he spoke in front of an audience of his (2) _____s, potential voters came away thinking, "He's one of us." His speeches always sounded (3) _____, never rehearsed. When he made his way through a crowd, shaking hands, even (4) _____s like "Great to see you!" and "What a beautiful baby!" sounded original and sincere. He seemed like a model of decorum° as well. When he would hear of the (5) _____ behavior of other politicians, he would shake his head sadly over their loose conduct. He constantly appeared in public with his wife of thirty years, as if to show he was a devoted family man. Understandably, he was reelected several times.



But at the (6) _____ of the mayor's career, disturbing rumors and innuendos° began to circulate. It was insinuated° that the mayor had won his first election by fraudulent° means. The manager of his first campaign became seriously ill. Knowing she was not likely to survive, she told several close friends that she wanted to disclose a guilty secret before dying. She made the (7) _____ that, during the campaign, the mayor had blackmailed his opponent. The opponent had a teenage daughter who had been caught shoplifting. Although the store owner had lectured the girl and let her go, the mayor learned of the story. He promised he would ruin the girl's reputation if his opponent did not deliberately lose the election.

The campaign manager's claims finally reached the evening news. When the mayor tried to (8) _____ the story, the former opponent and his daughter came forward to say it was true. The mayor could not escape the (9) _____ of this sordid° scandal. His reputation as a man of impeccable° character was destroyed, and the damage was (10) _____. He lost the support of his party and even his staunch° friends, and he soon retired from politics.