Definitions

1. accede (ak’séd’)
   (v.) to yield to; to assume an office or dignity
   Management was not willing to accede to labor’s initial demands, thus increasing the likelihood of a long and bitter strike.
   SYNONYMS: consent, concur, comply, assent
   ANTONYMS: demur, balk at

2. brandish (bránd’sh)
   (v.) to wave or flourish in a menacing or vigorous fashion
   He brandished his umbrella repeatedly in a vain effort to hail a cab.
   SYNONYMS: swing, shake

3. comprise (kám priz’)
   (v.) to include or contain; to be made up of
   Classical symphonies usually comprise three or four movements of varying musical form, tempo, and character.
   SYNONYMS: compose, constitute, encompass
   ANTONYMS: exclude

4. deft (dëft)
   (adj.) skillful, nimble
   The deft fingers of Spanish seamstresses produced some of the finest, most delicate lace ever seen.
   SYNONYMS: dexterous, adroit, proficient, clever, masterful
   ANTONYMS: clumsy, awkward, bungling, inept

5. destitute (des’ta tút’)
   (adj.) deprived of the necessities of life; lacking in
   Some people fled their homes so suddenly that they arrived at the refugee camp absolutely destitute.
   SYNONYMS: wanting, devoid, penniless
   ANTONYMS: rich, luxurious, bountiful, full, replete

6. explicit (ek splis’ it)
   (adj.) definite, clearly stated
   The more explicit your directions are, the easier it will be for all of us to find our way to the campsite.
   SYNONYMS: distinct, forthright, unambiguous, clear
   ANTONYMS: vague, ambiguous, implied, implicit

7. extirpate (ek’s tér pát’)
   (v.) to tear up by the roots; to destroy totally
   We must do everything we can to extirpate racism from American society.
   SYNONYMS: uproot, eradicate, wipe out, exterminate
   ANTONYMS: implant, sow, foster, nourish

8. inopportune (in’ op’ rú np’ rú)
   (adj.) coming at a bad time; not appropriate
   Why do my relatives always seem to turn up at the most inopportune time imaginable?
   SYNONYMS: ill-timed, inconvenient, inappropriate, unsuitable
   ANTONYMS: timely, convenient, felicitous, opportunistic

9. ironic (i ran’ ik’)
   (adj.) suggesting an incongruity between what might be expected and what actually happens; given to irony, sarcastic
   The short stories of O. Henry are famous for their ironic endings.
   SYNONYMS: incongruous, satiric, sardonic, wry
   ANTONYMS: straightforward, unequivocal

10. musty (mas’té)
    (adj.) stale, moldy, out-of-date
    Houses that have been closed up for a very long time often have an unpleasantly musty smell about them.
    SYNONYMS: hackneyed, antiquated
    ANTONYMS: sweet-smelling, up-to-date, brand-new

11. officious (ó fis’ aw’)
    (adj.) meddling; excessively forward in offering services or assuming authority
    The manager of the store warned the entire sales force not to be officious when helping customers.
    SYNONYMS: meddlesome, prying, impertinent, obtrusive
    ANTONYMS: reserved, indifferent, timid, aloof

12. ominous (ó men’ as)
    (adj.) unfavorable, threatening, of bad omen
    The sound of distant thunder warned us of the storm’s approach.
    SYNONYMS: unpromising, suspicious, portentous
    ANTONYMS: propitious, auspicious, promising

13. pinnacle (pi’ nál)
    (n.) a high peak or point
    Some pop musicians reach the pinnacle of their careers comparatively early in life.
    SYNONYMS: apex, acme, summit, apogee
    ANTONYMS: nadir, perigee, low point
14. premeditated (presh`id`t-id) (adj; past) considered beforehand, deliberately planned
   Some crimes are spontaneous acts of passion; others are quite _________.
   SYNONYMS: preplanned, rehearsed, prearranged
   ANTONYMS: unplanned, spontaneous, impromptu

15. rampant (ram` pant) (adj) growing without check, running wild
   All kinds of odd rumors run __________ during a political campaign.
   SYNONYMS: widespread, unrestrained, extravagant, prevalent
   ANTONYMS: controlled, restrained

16. solace (sal so) (n.) comfort, relief; (v.) to comfort, console
   Many world leaders seek __________ from the cares of state in the pages of great literature.
   I could find no way to ________ my deeply troubled conscience.
   SYNONYMS: (v.) soothe, reassure, cheer up
   ANTONYMS: (v.) vex, aggravate, upset

17. stately (stii le) (adj) dignified, majestic
   The __________ procession slowly wound its way from the palace to the cathedral.
   SYNONYMS: grand, magnificent, imposing
   ANTONYMS: lowly, humble, servile, abject

18. supple (sup` ol) (adj) bending easily; bending with agility; readily adaptable; servile
   Have you ever read Robert Frost's famous poem about swinging on the __________ branches of a birch tree?
   SYNONYMS: flexible, limber, pliable,pliant
   ANTONYMS: rigid, unbending, hidebound

19. suppress (su pres`) (v.) to stop by force, put down
   Totalitarian governments usually take strong measures to __________ free speech.
   SYNONYMS: subdue, crush, stifle, squelch, quash, silence
   ANTONYMS: provoke, spur, arouse, incite, instigate

20. venal (ven` ol) (adj) open to or marked by bribery or corruption
   The presence of even one __________ official may jeopardize the integrity of an entire organization.
   SYNONYMS: dishonest, bribeable, corruptible, mercenary
   ANTONYMS: honest, incorruptible, scrupulous

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Choosing the Right Word

Select the **boldface** word that better completes each sentence. You might refer to the essay on pages 76–71 to see how most of these words are used in context.

1. Eliza Doolittle was a poor flower seller, but she learned to conduct herself with the (supple, stately) bearing of a princess.
2. Coming at a time when I was flat broke, your suggestion that we have a bite to eat and go to the movies was highly (officious, inopportune).
3. Was Oscar Wilde being (ironic, deaf) when he said that he could resist everything except temptation?
4. The way he (brandishes, comprises) his facts and figures reminds me of a butcher swinging a meat cleaver.
5. Someone who believes that everyone has a price must think that human beings are (premeditated, venal) by nature.
6. Traveling in the dead of night, the weary travelers found (solace, pinnacle) knowing that their journey would lead them to freedom.
7. He is in for a rude awakening if he thinks that as the son of a rich family, he will simply (suppress, accede) to a position of wealth and power.
8. There's a world of difference between a helpful research assistant and an (explicit, officious) one!
9. Even in the prisoner-of-war camps, some basic feelings of decency and humanity were not completely (brandished, extirpated).
10. I have no patience with (musty, stately) old ideas about family roles based on gender.
11. His speech at first seemed highly dramatic and impressive, but we soon realized that he was quite (destitute, musty) of new ideas.
12. She has the kind of (supple, venal) personality that can easily adapt itself to a wide variety of needs and conditions.
13. Let's prepare a joint statement that will (accede, comprise) the various objections of all civic groups to the freeway plan.
14. How unfortunate that those in power are often presumed to have an (venal, inopportune) nature.
15. The only sure way to (brandish, suppress) social unrest is to make possible a decent, secure life for all the people.
16. During the darkest hours of defeat, their only (solace, pinnacle) was the knowledge that they had fought hard to the very end.

17. (Extravagating, Comprising) everything in its path, the deadly tornado left nothing but a desolate landscape.

18. The actress felt that she had reached the (solace, pinnacle) of fame when the principal of her former school asked for her autograph.

19. The senator finally (brandished, acceded) to the controversial legislation, handing her opponents a victory.

20. They tried to explain away their insult as a slip of the tongue, but in my opinion it was deliberate and (premeditated, ominous).

21. No doubt there are some dishonest officials, but it is a gross exaggeration to say that graft and corruption are (rampant, explicit) in our government.

22. We were prepared for a sharp scolding but not for the (inopportune, ominous) silence with which the principal greeted us.

23. No matter how ticklish the situation, the hero of the cartoon always devised some (deft, rampant) maneuver to avoid capture.

24. If the law is intended to limit nonessential use of gasoline and heating oil, it should state this (ironically, explicitly).

25. If you need to (accede, suppress) an itching rash, try an herbal remedy.

**Synonyms**

Choose the word from this unit that is the same or most nearly the same in meaning as the _boldface_ word or expression in the phrase. Write that word on the line. Use a dictionary if necessary.

1. the _distinguished_ language of the Gettysburg Address

2. a _stuffy_ old office building

3. consists of bits and pieces of longer works

4. a _contradictory_ conclusion to a promising career

5. left the orphans totally _impoverished_

6. at the very _height_ of the social scene

7. a rule that is _adjustable_ if circumstances require

8. actions that were obviously _calculated_

9. annoyingly _intrusive_ coworkers

10. an _unelegant_ occasion for a feast

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**Antonyms**

Choose the word from this unit that is most nearly opposite in meaning to the _boldface_ word or expression in the phrase. Write that word on the line. Use a dictionary if necessary.

1. a _fresh-smelling_ box of books

2. sections of the city that are extremely _wealthy_

3. a most _fitting_ time to visit

4. an extremely _stiff_ fabric

5. an art collection that _omits_ important works

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**Completing the Sentence**

From the words in this unit, choose the one that best completes each of the following sentences. Write the word in the space provided.

1. I vowed that I would ____________ every weed that dared to show itself in our newly seeded lawn.

2. The sudden drop in temperature and the unnatural stillness in the air were ____________ signs of an unfavorable change in the weather.

3. “We could not have chosen a more ____________ spot for our picnic,” she observed as she swept ants off the blanket.

4. The referee gave a(n) ____________ warning that if either team protested her decisions, she would be forced to call a technical foul.

5. Accomplished portrait painters can usually reveal a person’s character with a few ____________ strokes of a brush.

6. A great dancer, like a great athlete, must have a sharp sense of timing and a highly trained, responsive, and ____________ body.

7. Even when the economy is strong, there are always a large number of ____________ families in urgent need of assistance.

8. We will never ____________ to those selfish and unfair terms.

9. It is a sobering thought to realize that when one has reached the ____________ of a mountain, there is nowhere to go but down.

10. Airline companies often call in professional grief counselors to help ____________ the families and friends of crash victims.
11. How _______________ that they finally inherited all that money at a time when
       it could no longer help to solve their problems!

12. The unruly mob retreated as the line of deputies moved forward slowly,
       _______________ their riot sticks.

13. How can I ever forget that _______________ inspector in the customs office
       who insisted that I empty every piece of luggage before him!

14. The students couldn’t _______________ their groans of dismay when the
       teacher announced a surprise quiz.

15. Unfortunately, the so-called recreational facilities _______________ nothing
       more than a card table and a small-screen TV set.

16. Attacking the present administration, the candidate said that crime has been
       _______________ in the streets of our city.

17. Who can forget the stirring sight of those _______________ tall ships with
       their lofty masts and graceful lines as they sailed past the Statue of Liberty on
       the Fourth of July?

18. Who would have dreamed that the cluttered old attic, with all its darkness, dust,
       and _______________ odor, contained such a treasure!

19. Whether your act was _______________ or the result of carelessness, the
       fact remains that you have caused great pain to someone who has always been
       very good to you.

20. In the mid-1800s, “Boss” Tweed controlled New York City through a(n)
       _______________ political machine that fed on graft and extortion.

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Vocabulary in Context

Literary Text

1. I saw him smile to himself— grin rather—and lapse into ominous musing whenever
   Mrs. Linton had occasion to be absent from the apartment.
   Thoughts that are ominous are not:
   a. gloomy  c. hopeful
   b. dismal  d. harmful

2. Linton looked at me, but did not answer; and, after keeping her seat by his side
   another ten minutes, during which his head fell drowsily on his breast, and he
   uttered nothing except suppressed moans of exhaustion or pain, Cathy began to
   seek solace in looking for bilberries, and sharing the produce of her researches
   with me: she did not offer them to him, for she saw further notice would only weary
   and annoy.
   To seek solace is to seek
   a. respite  c. amusement
   b. defeat  d. danger

3. It was a Testament, in lean type, and smelling dreadfully musty: a fly-leaf bore
   the inscription—"Catherine Earnshaw, her book," and a date some quarter of a
   century back:
   A book that has a musty smell is
   a. new  c. old
   b. rare  d. original

4. The lands, being a minor, he could not meddle with. However, Mr. Heathcliff has
   claimed and kept them in his wife's right and his also: I suppose legally; at any rate.
   Catherine's destitute of cash and friends, cannot disturb his possession.
   Someone who is destitute is:
   a. vigilant  c. prosperous
   b. needy  d. prolific

5. "...Time stagnates here: we must surely have retired to rest at eight!"
   "Always at nine in winter, and rise at four," said
   my host, suppressing a groan, and, as I fancied, by the motion of his arm's shadow, clashing a tear
   from his eyes.
   The act of suppressing involves
   a. changing  c. conveying
   b. consoling  d. restraining