Definitions

1. alacrity (ə ler' ri ti) (n.) a cheerful readiness; brisk and eager action
   Neighbors responded with ______________________ to the woman's cries for help.
   SYNONYMS: promptness, willingness, celerity
   ANTONYMS: reluctance, unwillingness, hesitancy

2. alleviate (ə le' vĕ āt) (v.) to relieve, make more bearable
   The doctors and nurses did everything they could to ______________________ the patient's severe pain.
   SYNONYMS: lessen, allay, mitigate, assuage

3. antithesis (an thith' ə sis) (n.) the direct opposite, a sharp contrast
   Discriminatory practices may be said to constitute the very ______________________ of our nation's democratic ideals.
   SYNONYMS: contrary, antipode

4. appall (ə pŏl') (v.) to fill with dismay or horror
   The assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963 ______________________ the nation and the world.
   SYNONYMS: shock, stupify, horrify
   ANTONYMS: please, cheer, gladden, elate, exhilarate

5. bellicose (be lĭ kōs') (adj.) warlike in manner or temperament; quarrelsome
   Teddy Roosevelt's foreign policy was often driven by a rather ______________________ brand of patriotism.
   SYNONYMS: aggressive, combative, belligerent
   ANTONYMS: amicable, peaceable, pacific

6. disparage (dis păr' ij) (v.) to belittle, speak slightingly of; to undervalue
   Don't you think voters are getting awfully tired of listening to politicians ______________________ their opponents' voting records?
   SYNONYMS: degrade, decry, run down, underrate
   ANTONYMS: praise, extol, laud, plug

7. dissonant (dis' ə nant) (adj.) not in harmony; disagreeing, at odds
   The clamor of ______________________ voices could be heard clearly through the closed doors of the meeting room.
   SYNONYMS: grating, unmelodious, irreconcilable
   ANTONYMS: harmonious, agreeing, euphonious

8. droll (drol) (adj.) amusingly odd
   The hero or heroine of a popular sitcom may be surrounded by a cast of ______________________ eccentrics.
   SYNONYMS: comical, humorous, whimsical, zany
   ANTONYMS: humorless, solemn, dour

9. edict (ě dikt) (n.) an order issued by someone in authority
   Only in fairy tales can human unhappiness and misery be banished forever by royal ______________________
   SYNONYMS: command, decree, proclamation

10. elucidate (i lū' ə sāt) (v.) to clarify, explain
   The precise meaning of a passage in Middlemarch is sometimes hard to ______________________
   SYNONYMS: interpret, expound, explicate
   ANTONYMS: obscure, belaud, muddy, obtuse

11. laud (lōd) (v.) to praise
   At the assembly the principal ______________________ both students and teachers for the schoolwide improvement in reading scores.
   SYNONYMS: hail, extol, glorify, extant
   ANTONYMS: criticize, censure, belittle, disparage

12. lolli (lō) (v.) to act in a lazy manner; to lounge; to recline, droop
   There is nothing I would rather do on a hot, humid summer afternoon than ______________________ in a hammock under a tree.
   SYNONYMS: loafl, loiter, sag, dangle

13. loquacious (lō kwā' shas) (adj.) talkative, wordy; fond of talking
   My dinner companion was so ______________________ that our conversation quickly turned into a monologue.
   SYNONYMS: gossipy, voluble, garrulous, long-winded
   ANTONYMS: silent, reticent, closemouthed, terse, taciturn

14. magnanimous (mən' nə mōz) (adj.) generous in forgiving, above small meanness
   The general's victory was so decisive that he could afford to be ______________________ toward his former enemies.
   SYNONYMS: unselfish, charitable, noble, bigharted
   ANTONYMS: petty, selfish, unforgiving, spiteful
15. mandatory
   (man`da tör`e) (adj.) required, obligatory
   A union contract may stipulate that members are to receive
   a ____________________ annual cost-of-living increase.
   SYNONYMS: compulsory, requisite, imperative
   ANTONYMS: optional, voluntary, discretionary

16. nondescript
   (nənd skrɪpt) (adj.) ordinary, not outstanding; not easily classified
   Fashion critics judged the designer's fall clothing line to be
   disappointingly ____________________
   SYNONYMS: plain, unremarkable, unimpressive
   ANTONYMS: remarkable, vivid, prepossessing

17. phlegmatic
   (fleg mat′ık) (adj.) slow-moving, sluggish; unemotional
   Sloths are such ____________________ creatures that they
   have earned the reputation of being the slowest animals on
   Earth.
   SYNONYMS: lethargic, indolent, torpid, impassive
   ANTONYMS: emotional, sensitive, thin-skinned, excitable

18. rescind
   (ri sənd′) (v.) to repeal, cancel
   A sitting Congress sometimes ____________________
   statutes passed by its predecessors.
   SYNONYMS: withdraw, retract, annul, abrogate
   ANTONYMS: affirm, endorse, uphold, ratify

19. vivacious
   (va və′ shas) (adj.) lively, sprightly, full of energy
   A ____________________ individual will certainly never lack
   for companions.
   SYNONYMS: spirited, animated, ebullient
   ANTONYMS: dull, spiritless, listless, indolent

20. whet
   (wet) (v.) to sharpen, put an edge on; to make keen or eager
   In most mystery novels, the first chapter is designed to
   ____________________ your curiosity to find out "who
   done it."
   SYNONYMS: hone, excite, stimulate
   ANTONYMS: blunt, deaden, stifle, dampen

Choosing the Right Word

Select the **boldface** word that better completes each sentence.
You might refer to the selection on pages 117–175 to see how
most of these words are used in context.

1. In the eyes of such leaders as Gandhi and Martin
   Luther King, Jr., violence is the very **(edict,**
   **antithesis**) of a civilized society.

2. Only a truly **(phlegmatic,** **vivacious**) person could
   have remained calm in the face of such provocation.

3. The cake was delicious, but the serving was so small
   that it did little more than **(elucidate,** **whet)** my appetite.

4. In the fight against air pollution, many states have
   made filtering devices **(droll,** **mandatory)** for all cars
   sold within their borders.

5. Observers doubted that any coalition composed of
   such **(magnanimous,** **dissonant)** factions could long
   refrain from petty infighting.

6. It is sometimes said that women are more **(loquacious,**
   **bellicose)** than men, but all the men I know do their
   full share of talking.

7. Churchill told the British to be resolute in war, defiant in defeat, and **(magnanimous,**
   **loquacious)** in victory.

8. The only truly effective way to **(appall,** **alleviate)** the poverty of developing nations is
   to help increase their capacity to produce wealth.

9. An **(edict,** **antithesis)** was issued by the Holy Roman Emperor to ban the writings of Martin Luther because he challenged the absolute authority of the pope.

10. By **(rescinding,** **elucidating)** the concept of a pyramid scheme in her opening
    statement, the attorney hoped to clarify why her client was innocent.

11. Her manner of speaking is so **(vivacious,** **phlegmatic)** that even her most
    commonplace remarks seem to suggest charm and excitement.

12. There must be a serious flaw in the character of those who have a constant need to
    **(laud,** **disparage)** others.

13. This young man has been **(lauded,** **loathed)** by many colleagues and fans as the
    most creative game designer in the industry.

14. Although Americans are not a **(bellicose,** **mandatory)** people, they have proven
    themselves prepared to defend their nation at any cost.

15. His jokes were actually not too good, but his **(nondescript,** **droll)** manner of
    delivering them made a big hit with the audience.
16. The houses in that development are a mixture of (dissonant, nondescript) styles, with no particular architectural character or distinguishing features.

17. I see no reason to (laud, disparage) him in such glowing terms for doing no more than his duty.

18. Your relaxed and lackadaisical attitude reveals a (phlegmatic, loquacious) personality, which means that you would not be happy in a fast-moving, high-pressure job.

19. Reporters asked the mayor to (elucidate, alleviate) her ambiguous remarks about her plans to seek higher office.

20. Maya pretended to be indifferent about going to the dance, but I noticed that she accepted Joshua’s invitation with (antithesis, alacrity).

21. What (appalled, lolling) us even more than their fearful living conditions was that the refugees seemed to have lost all hope.

22. The expression, “What goes up must come down,” might be termed an (alacrity, edict) of nature.

23. Would you rather (rescind, lol) in the back seat of a chauffeured limousine or drive your own convertible?

24. Because of the incidents that occurred during hazing week, the school may (wet, rescind) the rules that allow fraternity initiations.

25. Do you have any remedies that can (disparage, alleviate) an upset stomach?

**Synonyms**

1. joined the **dynamic** group of dancers

2. refused to obey the **directive**

3. agreed to the proposal with **dispatch**

4. **Illuminate** fine points of the law

5. a preview that **arouses** your curiosity

6. a series of **strident** chords

7. **Llighten** the tax burden

8. known to have a **stolid** temperament

9. **Revoked** the ban on parking in midtown

10. a truly **commonplace** personality

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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. **conveys** a **lively** personality

2. **dulls** the blade of an axe

3. adopted a **conciliatory** attitude

4. enjoys a **languid** Sunday afternoon

5. purchased the most **distinctive** car on the lot

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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. Instead of waiting for government help, let's do all we can right now to __________ the sufferings of the flood victims.

2. His disposition is so __________ that he is apt to turn a simple difference of opinion into a full-scale donnybrook.

3. In spite of her inexperience as a programmer, she attacked her new job with __________ and made good progress.

4. Although in America voting is not __________, every qualified citizen has a duty to go to the polls in every election.

5. Unlike you, I have never lived in France, but is there any reason for you to __________ my efforts to speak French?

6. The principal finally __________ the unfair school regulation that prevented new students from trying out for the varsity teams.

7. You can make requests and suggestions if you wish, but please don't issue any __________

8. When the speaker tried to __________ the statement he had just made, I became more confused than ever.

9. In a time of fast-talking, loud comedians, is there a place for his kind of quiet, __________ humor?

10. At that dull, stodgy party, her __________ personality was like a breath of fresh air.
11. His enthusiastic and colorful description of the new series on public TV has ____________ my desire to see it.

12. I shall never forget your ________________ offer to coach me, even though we were competing for the same role in the play.

13. Is this ________________ little house the “magnificent mansion” that you’ve been telling us about all these weeks?

14. Their sarcastic remarks introduced a(n) ________________ note into what had been a harmonious meeting.

15. Even the state troopers, who had been hardened by long experience, were ________________ when they came on the scene of the automobile accident.

16. He may appear to be ________________ but his friends are aware of the strong emotions simmering beneath his quiet exterior.

17. I’m usually quite energetic, but there are times when I want to do nothing but ________________ about and listen to my favorite music.

18. I would have preferred to enjoy the paintings quietly, without listening to the explanations of the ________________ guide.

19. His idle, pleasure-seeking way of life is the exact ________________ of all that his hardworking parents had expected of him.

20. Though her friends ________________ her many achievements, her enemies ridiculed them.

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**Writing: Words in Action**

1. Look back at “A Short History of Hygiene” (pages 174–175). Suppose you were given the opportunity to enlighten the people of the so-called Dark Ages about the importance of cleanliness. To convince them that good hygiene is essential to healthy living, write a public service announcement explaining why all citizens should wash regularly. Use at least two details from the passage and three unit words.

2. New discoveries and expanded knowledge often prompt changes in the way people live. What new discoveries, improved information, or revived ideas in recent years have prompted—or may later prompt—changes in lifestyle? Write a brief essay in which you describe a change that is now taking place (or may soon take place) as the result of a new discovery or improved information. Support your ideas with your own experience, observations, studies, and the reading (pages 174–175). Write at least three paragraphs, and use three or more words from this unit.

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**Vocabulary in Context**

**Literary Text**

The following excerpts are from The House of the Seven Gables by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Some of the words you have studied in this unit appear in boldface type. Complete each statement below the excerpt by circling the letter of the correct answer.

1. With miles and miles of varied scenery between, there was no scene for her to save the seven old gable-peaks... This one old house was everywhere! It transported its down on whatever spot she glanced at.

   To position something **phlegmatically** assumes an attitude of
   
   a. urgency     c. indifference   
   b. superiority d. caring

2. His present phase, as a dago-neutropists, was of no more importance in his own view, nor likely to be more permanent, than any of the preceding ones. It had been taken up with the careless **alacrity** of an adventurer, who had his bread to earn. It would be thrown aside as carelessly...

   A person who exhibits **alacrity** is NOT
   
   a. sluggish     c. decisive   
   b. quick d. spirited

3. Then she was attracted by a chaise rapidly passing, and watched its moist and glistening top, and its splashing wheels, until it had turned the corner, and refused to carry any further her idly trifling, because **appalled** and overburdened, mind.

   A mind that is **appalled** is
   
   a. closed off     c. judgmental   
   b. idle d. dismayed

4. Indeed they have; and the hour is noted on a card, which is, or ought to be, in Judge Pynchon's right vest-pocket. Let him go thither, and **loll** at ease upon his moneybags! He has lounged long enough in the old chair!

   To **loll** means
   
   a. to look upon     c. to laugh merrily   
   b. to lie around d. to run through

5. The chicken, hereupon, though almost as venerable in appearance as its mother...mustered **vivacity** enough to flutter upward and alight on Phoebe's shoulder.

   An animal that exhibits **vivacity** is
   
   a. indecisive     c. clever   
   b. lethargic d. vigorous

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**Interactive Quiz**

Snap the code, or go to vocabularyworkshop.com