

CHAPTER 10

Descriptive Words II

indomitable, 1
inept, 2
innate, 3
inscrutable, 4
insidious, 5
intrepid, 6
lethal, 7
lethargic, 8
lucid, 9
lunar, 10
myopic, 11
naive, 12

nebulous, 13
nostalgic, 14
occult, 15
ominous, 16
opaque, 17
ostentatious, 18
picayune, 19
prolific, 20
pusillanimous, 21
raucous, 22
sagacious, 23
sedentary, 24

senile, 25
sinister, 26
stoical, 27
succinct, 28
taciturn, 29
toxic, 30
venerable, 31
verbose, 32
verdant, 33
vicarious, 34
vindictive, 35
zealous, 36

This chapter continues our study of descriptive words.

Follow the same procedure as in the previous chapter.

COVER THIS STRIP ▼

EXERCISES

1. **indomitable** (in-dom' i-tə-bəl): unconquerable; unyielding.
 2. **inept**: clumsy; incompetent; not suitable.
- (a)
- inept
- An *indomitable* fighter (a) fights on and on, (b) quits. ()
 - A pianist wearing mittens would probably be _____ [impeccable / inept].
- indomitable
- Every nation speaks of its soldiers' *ind* _____ courage.
 - The Dodgers made five errors in the field and were just as _____ *pt* at the plate.
- inept
- indomitable
- Wanda climbed to the peak, for her spirit was _____ *ble*; but I slipped off a boulder, for I was _____ *pt*.
- inept
3. **innate** (i-nāt'): inborn; natural, not acquired.
 4. **inscrutable** (in-skrōō' tə-bəl): mysterious; not able to be understood.
- not innate
- One's political beliefs are _____ [innate / not innate].
 - When we speak of "*inscrutable fate*," we mean that we _____ [can / cannot] easily foresee the future.
- cannot
- At one time no mystery melodrama was complete without its slinking and *in* _____ foreign butler.
- inscrutable
- Ducklings seem to have an *in* _____ attraction to water.
- innate
- At age five Capablanca had already shown an *in* _____ talent for chess; and his face over the tournament board was tight-lipped and *in* _____.
- innate
- inscrutable
5. **insidious** (in-sid' ē-əs): treacherous; crafty; more dangerous than is apparent.
 6. **intrepid** (in-trep' id): very brave; dauntless; bold.
- insidious
- Traitors who bore from within are _____ [innate / insidious].
- intrepid
- Courageous aviators are said to be _____ [intrepid / craven].

intrepid

■ Only hardy and *int* _____ men could reach the North Pole.

insidious

■ Socrates was accused of corrupting the Athenian youths with *in* _____ doctrines.

intrepid

■ Sam danced into the lion's cage to prove how _____ *id* he was, but some *ins* _____ fellow had left a banana peel on the floor.

insidious

QUIZ

Write the letter that indicates the best definition.

- | | | |
|--------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. (f) | () 1. indomitable | a. stealthily treacherous |
| 2. (d) | () 2. inept | b. inborn |
| 3. (b) | () 3. innate | c. mysterious; beyond understanding |
| 4. (c) | () 4. inscrutable | d. awkward; clumsy |
| 5. (a) | () 5. insidious | e. fearless; brave |
| 6. (e) | () 6. intrepid | f. unable to be defeated |

7. **lethal** (lē'thəl): causing death; deadly; fatal.

8. **lethargic** (lē-thär'jik): sluggish; dull; drowsy.

chlorine

■ A *lethal* gas used in World War I was _____ [oxygen / chlorine].

lethal

■ A gun, a knife, an automobile—any of these may be considered a _____ *al* weapon in a court case.

lethargic

■ Basketball coaches don't want _____ [ambidextrous / lethargic] athletes.

lethargic

■ Having swallowed the pig, the snake became *le* _____ and sleepy.

lethargic

■ This heavy smog has slowed me up, and I feel _____; I hope the stuff is not _____ *al*.

lethal

9. **lucid** (lōō'sid): clear; easily understood; mentally sound.

10. **lunar** (lōō'nār): pertaining to the moon.

(b)

■ A *lunar* eclipse blots out (a) the sun, (b) the moon. ()

lucid

■ Technical directions ought to be _____ [enigmatic / lucid].

lunar

■ On the moon the astronauts conducted certain _____ *ar* experiments.

lucid

■ Velma says her friend is crazy but that he has his _____ *id* moments.

lucid

■ The friendly astronomer gave us a _____ *d* description of the _____ *r* landscape.

lunar

11. **myopic** (mī-op'ik): nearsighted.

12. **naive** (na-ēv'): childlike; artless; lacking in worldly wisdom.

myopic

■ Nearsighted people are _____ [myopic / hyperopic].

naive

■ Anyone who thinks that concert artists don't have to practice is pretty _____ [naive / astute].

myopic

■ Benny sat in the front row and strained to see the movie. He was quite *my* _____.

naive

■ College freshmen range from the very sophisticated to the very *na* _____.

QUIZ

Write the letter that indicates the best definition.

- | | | |
|--------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. (f) | () 1. lethal | a. nearsighted |
| 2. (b) | () 2. lethargic | b. slow-moving; sluggish |
| 3. (c) | () 3. lucid | c. easy to understand; clear |
| 4. (e) | () 4. lunar | d. childlike; unsophisticated |
| 5. (a) | () 5. myopic | e. of the moon |
| 6. (d) | () 6. naive | f. deadly |

13. **nebulous** (neb'yōō-lās): cloudy; vague; indefinite.

14. **nostalgic** (nos-tal'jik): homesick; yearning for what is past or far away.

(b)

■ *Nebulous* plans are (a) clearly detailed, (b) vague. ()

(b)

■ A *nostalgic* line is (a) "Brevity is the soul of wit," (b) "Gone, gone, are the lovely lasses of yesteryear." ()

- nostalgic ■ Recalling his three happy years in the fifth grade, Grandpa became *no* _____.
- nebulous ■ Through the Los Angeles smog we could make out the *neb* _____ outline of the city hall.
- nostalgic ■ Dad sings "When You and I Were Young, Maggie" and other *no* _____ songs; meanwhile his prospects for finding a job are *ne* _____.
- nebulous ■ Dad sings "When You and I Were Young, Maggie" and other *no* _____ songs; meanwhile his prospects for finding a job are *ne* _____.
15. **occult** (ə-kult'): beyond human understanding; mysterious.
16. **ominous** (om'ə-nəs): threatening; menacing.
- (b) ■ *Occult* subjects include (a) geometry, (b) astrology. ()
- occult ■ Telepathy and reincarnation belong to those puzzling areas known as the *oc* _____.
- (b) ■ An *ominous* gesture is (a) friendly, (b) threatening. ()
- ominous ■ Over the ball park hung dark and *om* _____ clouds.
- occult ■ A spiritualist with *oc* _____ powers evoked a baritone ghost—it made *om* _____ predictions that curled our hair.
- ominous ■ A spiritualist with *oc* _____ powers evoked a baritone ghost—it made *om* _____ predictions that curled our hair.
17. **opaque** (ō-pāk'): not letting light through; obscure; unintelligent.
18. **ostentatious** (os'tən-tā'shəs): showy and pretentious so as to attract attention.
- (a) ■ *Opaque* glass is sometimes used in (a) bathrooms, (b) automobile windshields. ()
- (b) ■ An *ostentatious* living room seems to say, (a) "I'm simple and comfortable," (b) "Look, look—see how grand and expensive I am!" ()
- ostentatious ■ It was a bit *ost* _____ of Mrs. Schmaltz to go shopping for groceries (a) in her pink Cadillac with chauffeur, (b) on her Schwinn bicycle. ()
- (a) ■ Such a dolt! His mind is absolutely *op* _____.
- opaque ■ My dusty glasses were practically *op* _____, yet I saw that Diamond Jim was wearing six or eight sparkling rings. Hmm, somewhat *os* _____, I thought.
- ostentatious ■ My dusty glasses were practically *op* _____, yet I saw that Diamond Jim was wearing six or eight sparkling rings. Hmm, somewhat *os* _____, I thought.

QUIZ

Write the letter that indicates the best definition.

- | | | |
|--------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. (c) | () 1. ominous | a. sentimental about the past |
| 2. (d) | () 2. opaque | b. supernatural; beyond understanding |
| 3. (e) | () 3. ostentatious | c. threatening |
| 4. (f) | () 4. nebulous | d. not transparent |
| 5. (a) | () 5. nostalgic | e. showy to attract attention |
| 6. (b) | () 6. occult | f. vague; misty |

19. **picayune** (pik'ē-yōon'): petty; trivial; contemptible.
20. **prolific** (prō-lif'ik): fruitful; fecund; producing many works.

prolific ■ Agatha Christie, who wrote mystery novels by the dozen, was obviously very _____ [phlegmatic / prolific].

picayune ■ Charging extra for toothpicks in a restaurant is pretty _____ [picayune / petulant].

prolific ■ Rats multiply fast. They are *pr* _____.

picayune ■ The holdup netted sixty cents, or some such *pi* _____ amount.

prolific ■ Your fat batch of poems proves that you are *pr* _____, and my criticism of the spelling in your inspired poetry will seem *p* _____.

21. **pusillanimous** (pū'sə-lan'ə-məs): cowardly; fainthearted.
22. **raucous** (rō'kəs): rough-sounding; hoarse; boisterous.

raucous ■ The foghorn that awakened me was merely the sergeant's _____ [pusillanimous / raucous] voice.

(a) ■ On the battlefield the braggart Falstaff was actually timid—in fact, (a) pusillanimous, (b) raucous. ()

pusillanimous ■ Pancho is shy. He wants to marry Rosa, but he is too *pus* _____ to pop the question.

raucous ■ One distrusts car salespeople who are pushy and *ra* _____.

raucous
pusillanimous

■ A bumblebee chased me out of the park, and I heard
r_____ laughter from those who thought me
pu_____.

23. **sagacious** (sə-gā'shəs): shrewd; sound in judgment.

24. **sedentary** (sed'an-ter'i): involving sitting; physically inactive.

(a) ■ A *sagacious* decision is (a) wise, (b) stupid. ()

(a) ■ *Sedentary* work is done by (a) bookkeepers, (b) bricklayers. ()

sagacious

■ Advertising your umbrellas for sale just before the rainy weekend
was *sag*_____.

sedentary

■ The cowboy did not want office work or any other
*sed*_____ job.

sagacious

■ Old folks are not necessarily *sa*_____; some are just
*se*_____. Some are wise and some otherwise.

sedentary

QUIZ

Write the letter that indicates the best definition.

- | | | |
|--------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. (e) | () 1. sagacious | a. rough-sounding; harsh |
| 2. (c) | () 2. prolific | b. involving sitting |
| 3. (b) | () 3. sedentary | c. producing in abundance |
| 4. (f) | () 4. pusillanimous | d. petty; trivial |
| 5. (a) | () 5. raucous | e. having sound judgment |
| 6. (d) | () 6. picayune | f. timid; cowardly |

25. **senile** (sē'nīl): aged and infirm; showing the mental and bodily weaknesses of old age.

26. **sinister** (sin'is-tər): hinting of imminent danger; threatening harm.

(a) ■ *Senile* people are often cared for in a home for (a) the aged,
(b) wayward girls. ()

senile

■ The day our old neighbor wandered away from home in his
nightgown, we felt he was getting *sen*_____.

(b)

sinister

senile

sinister

■ If you were confronted by *sinister* strangers, you would probably
be (a) amused, (b) worried. ()

■ The conspirators hatched a *si*_____ plot.

■ The druggist, who was old and *se*_____, saw nothing
*si*_____ in Beulah's purchase of a quart of arsenic.

27. **stoical** (stō'i-kəl): indifferent to pain or pleasure.

28. **succinct** (sək-singkt'): concise; terse; brief and meaningful.

succinct

■ Cablegrams at three dollars a word should be _____
[succinct / redundant].

succinct

■ Wordiness is boring, so be *suc*_____.

(a)

■ Even during childbirth she was *stoical*: in other words, she was
(a) calm and uncomplaining, (b) screaming her head off. ()

stoical

■ The captured warrior endured the ritual of torture with
*st*_____ calm.

stoical

succinct

■ Mr. Koltz sat quiet and *st*_____ during most of Buster's
birthday party, but finally he made a *su*_____
announcement: "Shut up!"

29. **taciturn** (tas'i-tûrn'): not inclined to talk; uncommunicative.

30. **toxic** (tok'sik): poisonous.

(a)

■ *Taciturn* people tend to (a) be silent, (b) talk your arm off. ()

toxic

■ Pesticides are usually _____ [toxic / nutritious].

toxic

■ Wilbur said he wasn't afraid of *to*_____ fumes. We bury
him on Tuesday.

taciturn

■ Chess players are inclined to be reflective and *ta*_____.

toxic

taciturn

■ "I filled my tires with smoggy, *to*_____ New Jersey
air," I explained, "and they died." Replied the *ta*_____
Vermont mechanic: "Hm-m-mp."

QUIZ

Write the letter that indicates the best definition.

- | | | |
|--------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1. (c) | () 1. taciturn | a. showing no emotions |
| 2. (e) | () 2. senile | b. poisonous |
| 3. (b) | () 3. toxic | c. not talkative |
| 4. (d) | () 4. sinister | d. ominous; threatening |
| 5. (f) | () 5. succinct | e. old and feeble |
| 6. (a) | () 6. stoical | f. concise; brief |

31. **venerable** (ven'ər-ə-bəl): aged and worthy of reverence.

32. **verbose** (vər-bōs'): wordy; long-winded.

venerable ■ Ulysses was a wise and _____ [venerable / venerable] warrior.

(b) ■ *Verbose* statements contain too many (a) ideas, (b) words. ()

verbose ■ Trim your theme; it is v_____.

venerable ■ We gazed at the *ven*_____ statue of Abraham Lincoln.

venerable ■ Every evening my white-haired and *ven*_____ military friend gave me a _____*ose* account of how he won the war.

verbose

33. **verdant** (vûr'dənt): green; covered with grass; unsophisticated.

34. **vicarious** (vī-kâr'i-əs): participating by imagination in another's experience.

(a) ■ *Verdant* fields are (a) grassy, (b) covered with boulders. ()

vicarious ■ By identifying yourself with your movie hero you have _____ [venerable / vicarious] pleasure.

verdant ■ William Wordsworth trod these *ver*_____ meadows.

vicarious ■ From the adventures of D'Artagnan, Jane Eyre, and Martin Arrowsmith we derive a *vi*_____ thrill.

verdant ■ Novels take us from foamy seas to *ver*_____ hills; they let us live a thousand *vi*_____ lives.

vicarious

vindictive

vindictive

(b)

zealous

zealous

vindictive

35. **vindictive** (vin-dik'tiv): revengeful; spiteful.

36. **zealous** (zel'əs): ardently devoted to a cause; enthusiastic.

■ To spite me, Bart bored a hole in my rowboat. It was a _____ [vindictive / venerable] act.

■ The boy who burned your garage to get even with you has a *vin*_____ nature.

■ A *zealous* reader reads with (a) reluctance, (b) enthusiasm. ()

■ A town orchestra or museum often exists because of a few *ze*_____ supporters.

■ My roommate, a *ze*_____ musician, played his violin all night until a *vi*_____ neighbor threw a can of beans through our window.

QUIZ

Write the letter that indicates the best definition.

- | | | |
|--------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. (e) | () 1. venerable | a. inclined to revenge; spiteful |
| 2. (d) | () 2. verbose | b. green with vegetation |
| 3. (b) | () 3. verdant | c. fervent; ardently active |
| 4. (f) | () 4. vicarious | d. wordy; talkative |
| 5. (a) | () 5. vindictive | e. commanding respect because of age |
| 6. (c) | () 6. zealous | f. sharing the feelings of others |

REVIEW TEST

Write the word studied in this chapter that will complete the sentence.

- _____ 1. The storm clouds looked black and [om-].
- _____ 2. Thirty errors! Our ball team was incredibly [in-p-].
- _____ 3. What a wise choice! You are quite [sag-].
- _____ 4. Five pages for a simple message? Joe is too [v-b-s-].
- _____ 5. Astrologers are steeped in supernaturalism and the [occ-].
- _____ 6. The bloody fight was for a jellybean or other [pic-] item.
- _____ 7. Her mink coat and flashy jewelry are a bit [ost-].
- _____ 8. Junior thinks babies grow under rocks. How [n-v-]!
- _____ 9. Last night Moe kissed Flo during the [lu-] eclipse.
- _____ 10. I buy two-trouser suits because of my [sed-] occupation.
- _____ 11. The astronauts reached the moon. What an [int-p-] crew!
- _____ 12. The condemned man showed no emotion. He was [sto-].
- _____ 13. The coalminer dreamed of trees and [ver-] meadows.
- _____ 14. I'm losing my shingles. I'm old, feeble, and [sen-].
- _____ 15. Cables are expensive. Keep the message [suc-].
- _____ 16. Hold the book closer. I'm [my-].
- _____ 17. Schubert wrote hundreds of songs. He was [pro-].
- _____ 18. The old man wallowed in sweet [nost-] memories of college.

Matching. Write the letter that indicates the best definition.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| () 19. venerable | a. an unmarried woman |
| () 20. zealous | b. stony; mountainous |
| () 21. pusillanimous | c. deadly |
| () 22. raucous | d. harsh-sounding |
| () 23. sinister | e. like a smelly animal |
| () 24. lethal | f. enthusiastic; dedicated to a cause |
| () 25. lucid | g. cowardly |
| | h. easy to understand; clear |
| | i. old and highly respected |
| | j. threatening danger |

KEY TO REVIEW TEST

Check your test answers with the following key. Deduct 4% per error from a possible 100%.

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|---------|
| 1. ominous | 10. sedentary | 19. (i) |
| 2. inept | 11. intrepid | 20. (f) |
| 3. sagacious | 12. stoical | 21. (g) |
| 4. verbose | 13. verdant | 22. (d) |
| 5. occult | 14. senile | 23. (j) |
| 6. picayune | 15. succinct | 24. (c) |
| 7. ostentatious | 16. myopic | 25. (h) |
| 8. naïve | 17. prolific | |
| 9. lunar | 18. nostalgic | |

Score: _____ %

SUPPLEMENTARY EXERCISE

Fill in the blank with the descriptive word that fits the definition.

Although these words were not defined in this chapter, you should recognize most of them.

Check your answers with the key at the end of the exercise. Use your dictionary to study any unknown words.

■ inclement, indolent, indefatigable, insipid, luminous

1. _____ without flavor; tasteless; dull
2. _____ stormy; without leniency
3. _____ shining; clear; bright
4. _____ tireless
5. _____ lazy; idle

■ morbid, oblivious, ornate, precocious, ruthless

6. _____ overdecorated; flowery
7. _____ unaware of; unmindful; forgetful
8. _____ cruel; pitiless
9. _____ maturing early; bright for its age
10. _____ excessively interested in gruesome matters

■ salutary, scurrilous, skeptical, spasmodic, squalid

11. _____ doubting; questioning; not easily convinced
12. _____ occurring now and then; fitful
13. _____ wretched; poverty-stricken in appearance
14. _____ foul-mouthed; grossly abusive
15. _____ beneficial; having a good effect

■ squeamish, staid, stalwart, suave, subtle

16. _____ strong; valiant; unyielding
17. _____ smoothly pleasant and polite, urbane
18. _____ oversensitive; prudish, easily disgusted
19. _____ cunning, crafty; delicately skillful
20. _____ sedate and settled

■ sullen, surreptitious, tepid, terse, voracious

21. _____ secret; stealthy; sneaky
22. _____ gloomy and resentful; glum; morose
23. _____ concise; to the point
24. _____ greedy; gluttonous; insatiable
25. _____ lukewarm

KEY TO SUPPLEMENTARY EXERCISE

- | | | |
|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. insipid | 10. morbid | 19. subtle |
| 2. inclement | 11. skeptical | 20. staid |
| 3. luminous | 12. spasmodic | 21. surreptitious |
| 4. indefatigable | 13. squalid | 22. sullen |
| 5. indolent | 14. scurrilous | 23. terse |
| 6. ornate | 15. salutary | 24. voracious |
| 7. oblivious | 16. stalwart | 25. tepid |
| 8. ruthless | 17. suave | |
| 9. precocious | 18. squeamish | |

Score: _____ %