LEARNERS

LEARNING WITH A DIFFERENCE

Vocabulary Building 4

A workbook specially designed to improve the vocabulary and writing skills of students

Betty Kirkpatrick MA

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LEARNERS PUBLISHING

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Preface

The purpose of ***Vocabulary Building Workbooks*** *3* and *4* is to increase students' knowledge of English words and expressions and so encourage them to extend the range of their own vocabulary. English has a rich and varied vocabulary and students should be urged to make use of this by introducing some variety into their own speech and writing. Of course, students must proceed with caution at first and learn how to use more unusual items in the correct context. These books will help them greatly in this learning process.

Each book contains 25 passages which demonstrate such features of English as euphemisms, the use of softer, less direct words for things that people do not wish to refer to bluntly; words which are only appropriate in informal contexts; difficult words which are only appropriate in formal contexts, and which should sometimes be replaced by simpler words in the interest of clarity; clichés, which are a major part of English, but which should be used sparingly, and so on. Each book also contains a **Vocabulary Study** section which explains selected words and expressions in the passages.

Each book also has two sets of exercises. **Exercise 1** consists of questions based on the aspects of English which are covered by the various passages. Thus, students are asked, for example, to replace a difficult word or expression with a simpler one; to say which of two confusable words is the correct one in context; to replace an informal word with a word from mainstream language; to remove a redundant word and so on. Answers are given so that students can check the accuracy of their responses.

Exercise 2 is based on the series of short statements about selected aspects of English presented in the section **More about Language**. These statements deal with plural forms; words liable to be confused; spelling problems; idioms; proverbs; words of foreign origin; acronyms and so on. Each statement is followed by a series of questions on this information for students to work on. Again, answers are given.

These information-packed books, if used conscientiously, will be of invaluable assistance in the important process of vocabulary development.

Unit 1

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

An unwanted resemblance

Just recently, several people have commented on my resemblance to my grandfather. Since he has been dead for a considerable number of years, very few of these people ever **met** him **in the flesh**, and those that did **are stricken in years** with fading memories. The others who claim to see a likeness are basing their judgement on photographs of my grandfather, or on one or two famous contemporary portraits of him.

If you think my comments indicate that I am not very pleased by the suggestion that I resemble my grandfather in looks, then you have **hit the nail on the head.** Undoubtedly, he was a musical genius, but even his best friend could not say, with any truth, that he was physically attractive.

Of course, he was already quite old when I was born and, in fairness, I should allow for the **depredations** of age on his physical appearance. He was practically completely bald, but with two strands of grey hair always carefully arranged over the shining top of his head, and with a most unattractive sparse, grey fringe straggling over the back of his collar.

He had fewer wrinkles than you might expect in a man of that age, but this simply made more visible the unsightly network of red, broken veins that spread over his cheeks on either side of his purplish-coloured, bulbous nose. From the state of his elderly **countenance**, you could be forgiven for assuming that he had been a **dipsomaniac** all his life, but I have no reason to believe that this was the case. Add to this the fact that he was excessively thin and stooped like a question mark, and you can appreciate that, at the time I knew him, my grandfather was **no oil painting.**

According to my late mother and her various **siblings** who are long dead, it would not be fair to blame my grandfather's unattractive appearance on **the ravages of** time alone. He had never been, in any way, handsome to look at. It may seem strange, then, that he had married, and remained married all his life to, a woman of most extraordinary beauty—my grandmother.

My grandfather was fortunate in that nature had given him many other gifts to offset his lack of physical beauty. Apart from his musical talent, he had great wit and could **charm the birds from the trees.** I have inherited some of his musical talent, for which I am grateful. However, I would much rather not have inherited his looks!

Vocabulary Study

bird, charm the birds from the trees

This expression is used to indicate that someone is very charming. It can be replaced by using the adjective **charming** or the noun **charm**:

- *I'm not surprised that Joe persuaded the old lady to lend him money. He can* ***charm the birds from the trees.***
- *I'm not surprised that Joe persuaded the old lady to lend him money. He has a great deal of* ***charm.***

countenance

This word, used in formal or literary contexts, means face. People sometimes use it because they think that it sounds impressive, but it is advisable to use the simpler word to make yourself clearly understood:

- *The girl had beautiful black hair and a lovely* ***countenance.***
- *The girl had beautiful black hair and a lovely* ***face.***

Language Help

Countenance can also mean expression:

- *We knew from John's furious countenance that he had failed to get the job.*

depredations

This is a formal expression meaning the harmful or damaging action or effects of something:

- *The area has never entirely recovered from the* ***depredations*** *of war.*
- *The area has never entirely recovered from the* ***destructive effects*** *of war.*

Language Help

Depredations is similar in meaning to ravages.

dipsomaniac

This is a formal or technical word meaning someone who is addicted to alcohol. It is better to use a simpler word, such as **alcoholic** or **alcohol addict**:

- *Frank was a* ***dipsomaniac*** *and died of liver disease.*
- *Frank was* ***addicted to alcohol*** *and died of liver disease.*

flesh, meet someone in the flesh

This is a cliché used to indicate that you have actually met or seen someone rather than having just seen a photograph or film of them:

- *The MP's face is familiar to me from all the election posters canvassing for support, but I have yet to* ***meet*** *him* ***in the flesh.***
- *The MP's face is familiar to me from all the election posters canvassing for support, but I have yet to* ***meet*** *him* ***in person.***

nail, hit the nail on the head

This is an idiom which has become a cliché. Since it means to be accurate or to do or say exactly the right thing, it is often a very appropriate expression. However, you should avoid overusing it:

- *You* ***hit the nail on the head*** *when you said that lack of money is the only barrier facing us.*
- *You* ***got it absolutely right*** *when you said that lack of money was the only barrier facing us.*

painting, no oil painting

This is a cliché used in a derogatory way, usually in an informal context, to suggest that someone is not at all attractive. The cliché can easily be avoided by the use of a word such as **unattractive**, **plain** or **ugly**:

- *Meg's new boyfriend is* ***no oil painting,*** *but he is a very generous and caring person.*
- *Meg's new boyfriend is* ***not at all good-looking,*** *but he is a very generous and caring person.*

ravage, the ravages of

This is a cliché, used in formal or literary contexts, meaning the damage caused by something. It is usually possible to reword a sentence, using a word such as **damage**, **destruction** or **ruin**, to avoid the cliché:

- *This was once an area of great beauty, but* ***the ravages of*** *industrialization have left it an ugly, miserable place.*
- *This was once an area of great beauty, but* ***the damage*** *done by industrialization has left it an ugly, miserable place.*

Language Help

Ravages is similar in meaning to depredations.

siblings

This is a formal or technical word meaning brother or sister. In contexts that are not formal or technical, it is best to use the simpler term:

- *Jane was very lonely as a child and was always sorry that she didn't have a* ***sibling.***
- *Jane was very lonely as a child and was always sorry that she didn't have a* ***brother or sister.***

year, stricken in years

This is rather an old-fashioned, formal or literary cliché meaning old. There are several synonyms for **old**, such as **elderly**, and so it is easy to find a substitute for the expression:

- *My father was already* ***stricken in years*** *when he developed cancer.*
- *My father was already quite* ***an old man*** *when he developed cancer.*

Language Help

The word **stricken** is found as a combining form in **poverty-stricken**, which means badly affected by poverty and so, extremely poor.

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *Since he has been dead for a considerable number of years, very few of these people ever* ***met*** *him* ***in the flesh.***

_____

_____

2. *If you think my comments indicate that I am not very pleased by the suggestion that I resemble my grandfather in looks, then you have* ***hit the nail on the head.***

_____

_____

3. *Of course, he was already quite old when I was born and, in fairness, I should allow for the* ***depredations*** *of age on his physical appearance.*

_____

_____

4. *It would not be fair to blame my grandfather's unattractive appearance on* ***the ravages of*** *time alone.*

_____

_____

5. *Apart from his musical talent, he had great wit and could* ***charm the birds from the trees.***

_____

_____

B Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *We had been kept waiting a long time and we were beginning to _____ at the delay. (* ***chafe / chaff*** *)*
2. *The _____ party left the church to make their way to the reception. (* ***bridal / bridle*** *)*
3. *There has been a _____ enquiry into the tragic event, but the judge has not yet given his verdict. (* ***judicial / judicious*** *)*
4. *I did not volunteer to help with the project. I was more or less _____ into assisting with it by the chairman of the committee. (* ***dragoned / dragooned*** *)*
5. *The young singer's voice has an unusually melodic _____. (* ***timber / timbre*** *)*

C Tick the idiom that has a similar meaning to the phrase in bold in each of the following sentences.

1. *You'll be* ***risking your life*** *if you attempt to climb the mountain at this time of year.*
   - *a. get a raw deal* ☐
   - *b. dice with death* ☐
   - *c. make a killing* ☐
   - *d. hang up your boots* ☐
2. ***I'm listening attentively.*** *Tell me all about your holiday.*
   - *a. pin back your ears* ☐
   - *b. be all ears* ☐
   - *c. keep your ear to the ground* ☐
   - *d. my ears are burning* ☐
3. *You can suggest a new system of office management to the boss, but he will certainly* ***turn your suggestion down.***
   - *a. give you the green light* ☐
   - *b. look on the bright side* ☐
   - *c. give you the thumbs down* ☐
   - *d. go through the motions* ☐
4. *Frank said that he would stay alone in the haunted house all night, but early in the evening he* ***became too nervous to do it*** *and left the house.*
   - *a. come a cropper* ☐
   - *b. get cold feet* ☐
   - *c. make tracks* ☐
   - *d. swing the lead* ☐
5. *Go on holiday as planned. If anything important happens,* ***I'll inform you.***
   - *a. get the hang of it* ☐
   - *b. tell you where to get off* ☐
   - *c. get your wires crossed* ☐
   - *d. keep you posted* ☐

Prepositions

Many common errors in English relate to **prepositions** and care must be taken with these. Many verbs in English are routinely followed by a particular preposition, for example:

> *The children's father was dead and they **relied on** their mother for everything.*
> *We **sympathized with** the people whose car had broken down, but there was nothing we could do to help them.*
> *The accident **deprived** the children **of** a father.*
> *The manager **hinted at** some form of fraud, but did not actually accuse any member of staff.*

Some verbs can be followed by either of two prepositions without any change of sense, as **abound in/abound with**:

> *The river **abounds in/with** salmon.*

Some verbs, used in different contexts, can be followed by the same preposition, but with a change in meaning:

> *The manager is **dealing with*** (= handling, coping with) *the complaint.*
> *The essay **deals with*** (= is about) *the destruction of the environment.*

Several adjectives are also routinely followed by a particular preposition:

> ***Contrary to** what James claims, Mary is a very honest person.*
> *The journey through the jungle was **fraught with** danger.*
> *Salary will be **commensurate with** professional qualifications and experience.*

Some adjectives can be followed by more than one preposition, usually with a change of meaning:

> *John is **concerned with** the financial side of the business.*
> *The police are **concerned about/for** the safety of the children.*

The adjective *different* can be followed by *from, to* or *than* with no change of meaning. **Different from** is acceptable in all contexts, and is always used in more formal contexts:

> *We are concerned that your new design is no* ***different from*** *the previous one and does not incorporate our suggested changes.*

Different to is used in informal contexts, such as in spoken English:

> *Pam's new boyfriend is no* ***different to*** *the previous one. He treats her just as badly.*

Different than is used in American English and this use is becoming popular in British English, especially when followed by a clause:

> *My political ideals are* ***different than*** *they were when I was young.*
> *It is Christmas Day, but, for people who have to work, it is no* ***different than*** *other days.*

Exercise 2

Insert the appropriate preposition in each blank.

1. *Jim insists _____ absolute honesty in his business dealings.*
2. *Do you believe _____ God?*
3. *Who is responsible _____ this appalling error?*
4. *Tom is indifferent _____ the wishes of others.*
5. *We are not averse _____ the idea of living in the country.*
6. *You must be able to communicate effectively _____ the members of your department.*
7. *He appears to be bereft _____ hope since he lost his job.*
8. *Frank is dedicated _____ his job.*
9. *All of you are directly answerable _____ the production director.*
10. *We hope that all these weeks of studying will culminate _____ success in the examinations.*

Unit 2

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

An inheritance

The Brown family were very excited. They had heard that their father had inherited a house, and all its furnishings, from Miss Robinson, a friend of his late aunt. Today, they were on their way to have a look at Mr Brown's inheritance.

Mr Brown had scarcely any recollection of Miss Robinson. He certainly had no memory of ever having visited the house which she had willed to him, and he was inclined to be pessimistic about it.

"I'm sure it will be **no great shakes,**" he said. "From what the solicitor says, Miss Robinson was very old when she died and had been in an old people's home for a long time. The property's probably an old **dump** that'll **cost an arm and a leg** to repair. And it's bound to be full of old junk that we'll have to pay to get rid of."

"Don't be such a **grouch,**" replied his wife. "It was very kind of Miss Robinson to leave you her house and you **shouldn't look a gift horse in the mouth**. Anyway, the house might not be a dump. It might be a **des res** that we can turn into an elegant holiday home. We might be able to rent it out and make some money. It might even be **jam-packed** with priceless antiques."

"In your dreams!" laughed Mr Brown, "but let's just wait and see what it's like when we get there. It can't be far now. In fact, I think we turn off right here."

When they arrived at Miss Robinson's house, they discovered that it was neither the hovel that Mr Brown was dreading, nor the palatial residence that Mrs Brown was hoping for. It was a charming cottage which was being well looked after by the friendly next-door neighbour, Mrs Blair.

"It's a solid, well-built property," said Mr Brown, "although it's in need of a bit of upgrading. It's a bit damp and we'll have to install central heating. Then, we could think of flooring the attic to make another bedroom. Still, we could do the repairs gradually and they wouldn't cost that much, especially if I did some of them myself."

Mrs Brown's **heart sank**. Her husband had long **fancied himself** as a builder and joiner, but he was an accountant and was absolutely hopeless at DIY. They always had to call in a qualified tradesman to put right his mistakes. Perhaps this house wasn't such a good idea after all!

Vocabulary Study

arm, cost an arm and a leg

This is an idiom which has become a cliché, used in fairly informal contexts. It means to cost a lot of money:

- *Have you seen Tom's new car? It must have* ***cost*** *him* ***an arm and a leg****!*
- *Have you seen Tom's new car? It must have* ***cost*** *him* ***a great deal of money****!*

des res

This is an expression, often used in informal or humorous contexts, although originally part of estate agents' jargon. It is short for **desirable residence** and refers to a house or flat which is considered to be particularly desirable, and therefore exclusive or expensive. The expression can be replaced with an expression relating to either of these adjectives:

- *We're not looking for a* ***des res****. We can only afford a low-budget flat.*
- *We're not looking for a* ***luxury house****. We can only afford a low-budget flat.*

dream, in your dreams!

You say **in your dreams!** to someone, in an informal context, when you want to indicate to them that they are hoping for something that is not likely to happen. The phrase can be replaced with an expression from standard language which indicates a lack of hope:

- *You think you'll get a job as a journalist without any qualifications?* ***In your dreams!***
- *You think you'll get a job as a journalist without any qualifications?* ***You have no hope!***

dump

The word **dump** in the context of the passage refers to a place which is dirty, broken down or unpleasant. It is an informal word and can be replaced by a word from standard language, such as **hovel**:

- *I can't believe the rent they're charging for this* ***dump****.*
- *I can't believe the rent they're charging for this* ***hovel****.*

fancy, fancy yourself

This is an informal expression meaning to regard yourself, wrongly, as having skill or talent at something:

- *Mike* ***fancies himself*** *as a professional singer, but he sings so badly that he embarrasses everyone when he gets on the stage.*
- *Mike* ***regards himself*** *as a professional singer, but he sings so badly that he embarrasses everyone when he gets on the stage.*
- *Mike* ***thinks he has the talent*** *to be a professional singer, but he sings so badly that he embarrasses everyone when he gets on the stage.*

gift horse, don't look a gift horse in the mouth

This is an idiom which has become a cliché. It urges someone not to criticize or find fault with something that has been given, or with an opportunity that has been offered. It is a phrase which is much overused:

- ***Don't look a gift horse in the mouth****. The flat may be small and not very well furnished, but Jane is lending you it rent-free.*
- ***Don't be so critical of something you're getting for nothing****. The flat may be small and not very well furnished, but Jane is lending you it rent-free.*

grouch

This is an informal word meaning someone who complains a lot. It can be replaced with a word from standard language such as **grumbler**, or you can reword the sentence and use a verb such as **complain** or **grumble**:

- *The boss is a real* ***grouch*** *these days. We're working as hard as ever, but he accuses us all of being lazy.*
- *The boss is* ***always complaining*** *these days. We're working as hard as ever, but he accuses us all of being lazy.*

heart, someone's heart sank

When you say someone's **heart sank**, you mean that they suddenly felt sad, disappointed, depressed, etc. It is a cliché and its overuse should

be avoided by substituting an expression relating to sadness, disappointment, etc:

- *Anne's **heart sank** when she saw the state of the holiday apartment which she had rented.*
- *Anne **felt miserable** when she saw the state of the holiday apartment which she had rented.*

jam-packed

This is an informal expression indicating that something is very full or crowded:

- *The first train in the morning is always **jam-packed** with people commuting to the city.*
- *The first train in the morning is always **extremely crowded** with people commuting to the city.*

shake, no great shakes

This is an informal expression which means to be not very good or useful, or to be of poor quality or in poor condition:

- *The second-hand car is **no great shakes**, but it's all I can afford at the moment.*
- *The second-hand car is **not in very good condition**, but it's all I can afford at the moment.*
- *Tom is **no great shakes** as a tennis player, but there's no one else available to make up a foursome.*
- *Tom is **not a very good** tennis player, but there's no one else available to make up a foursome.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *"I'm sure it will be **no great shakes**," he said.*

   _____

2. *The property's probably an old **dump** that'll **cost an arm and a leg** to repair.*

   _____

   _____

3. *It was very kind of Miss Robinson to leave you her house and you **shouldn't look a gift horse in the mouth**.*

   _____

   _____

4. *It might even be **jam-packed** with priceless antiques.*

   _____

5. *Her husband had long **fancied himself** as a builder and joiner.*

   _____

B Fill in the word missing from the idiom in each sentence.

1. *Jim has just started to train as a lawyer, but he wanted to be a pilot and he feels like **a** _____ **out of water** in an office.*
2. *Peter is attracted to pretty girls like **a** _____ **to a flame**.*

3. *Not only did Pam not win the singing competition, but she got* ***the wooden*** _____ .

4. *Harry has taken out a huge mortgage on his new flat. It will be* ***a*** _____ ***round his neck*** *for years.*

5. *Jane has been very shy all her life, but since she has left home she seems to be* ***coming out of her*** _____ .

C Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *She* _____ *her wealth before the poor people of the town and they resented and hated her. (* ***flaunted / flouted*** *)*

2. *The young man thought that his friend had insulted his honour and challenged him to a* _____ *the next day. (* ***dual / duel*** *)*

3. *The young athlete was accused of taking an illegal* _____ *.* *(* ***stimulant / stimulus*** *)*

4. *The little girl was wearing a red dress with a white* _____ *.* *(* ***yoke / yolk*** *)*

5. *Tom was determined to* _____ *vengeance on the drunk driver who had killed his brother. (* ***wreak / wreck*** *)*

Proverbs

Proverbs are traditional sayings which take the form of concise sentences and they are usually expressed in clever, witty or memorable language. They tend to offer advice or make some kind of moral comment on how we should lead our lives.

Many of them have been in the language for several hundreds of years and they play an important part in the English language.

The following are some examples of proverbs:

A friend in need is a friend indeed.
A true friend is someone who helps you when you are in some kind of difficulty or trouble.

Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones.
You should not criticize or condemn other people if you could be open to criticism yourself, especially with reference to the same thing.

Necessity is the mother of invention.
People will usually think of a way to cope with a difficult situation, often by using their imagination or ingenuity.

Nothing venture, nothing gain.
If you never attempt anything or take any risks, you cannot be successful at anything.

Prevention is better than cure.
It is better to stop something happening than to be able to put it right or find a remedy for it afterwards.

A trouble shared is a trouble halved.
It often helps to discuss a problem with someone, rather than worry about it alone.

Variety is the spice of life.
Change and variation make life more interesting and enjoyable.

Exercise 2

A Complete each proverb by inserting the missing word.

1. *A _____ in time saves nine.*
2. *United we _____, divided we fall.*
3. *What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the _____.*
4. *Silence is _____.*
5. *You cannot make an omelette without breaking _____.*

B Fill in each blank with a similar proverb from the box.

When in Rome, do as the Romans do.	*Still waters run deep.*
Two wrongs don't make a right.	*We must learn to walk before we can run.*
Leave well alone.	*You can't teach an old dog new tricks.*
Set a thief to catch a thief.	

1. *Old habits die hard.* _____
2. *An old poacher makes the best gamekeeper.* _____
3. *Two blacks don't make a white.* _____
4. *Rome wasn't built in a day.* _____
5. *Let sleeping dogs lie.* _____

C Fill in each blank with an opposite proverb from the box.

Distance lends enchantment to the view.	*A miss is as good as a mile.*
Many hands make light work.	*He who hesitates is lost.*
Money is power.	

1. *Something is better than nothing.* _____
2. *Out of sight, out of mind.* _____
3. *Money isn't everything.* _____
4. *Look before you leap.* _____
5. *Too many cooks spoil the broth.* _____

Unit 3

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

Moving on

Mrs Jackson was feeling rather depressed. She had decided that she was going to have to move house and she didn't really want to. She loved the house so much. Her late husband and she had moved in on their wedding day and their three children had been born there.

True, it wasn't in an ideal spot. Its **propinquity** to the main London railway line was rather a disadvantage, but you soon got used to the noise. Then, a few years ago, a developer had built some rather ugly houses on what had been green fields, thereby spoiling the Jacksons' **vista** of the beautiful valley below.

At first, Mrs Jackson had been very distressed by this, but her husband, Jack, had taken a **sanguine** view of the situation. He said that people had to live somewhere and that the Jackson family would soon forget that the green fields had ever been there. One of Jack's many virtues was to be able to cheer her up when she was **in the doldrums**.

But Jack had died two years ago and all of her children lived far away. She was lonely. It hadn't been too bad until recently because she had friendly, supportive neighbours on both sides and she had known them a long time.

A few months ago, however, Mr Brown, one of the neighbours, had begun to get very **amnesiac**. Sometimes he would go out and not be able to remember where he lived. He also began to get very **irascible** and **pugnacious**. When doctors diagnosed that he had Alzheimer's, his wife decided to move nearer her daughter, who lived at the other side of the country. Mrs Brown felt in need of some family **support** and **back-up**.

Just about the same time, Mrs Jackson's other neighbour, Mrs Lawson, became practically **immobile**. She had suffered from rheumatoid arthritis for many years, but it had suddenly got much worse. Her husband and she had decided to buy a much smaller house without stairs.

Mrs Jackson was **disconsolate** at the loss of her friends, but her new neighbours were the main problem. The Browns' house had been bought by a middle-aged bachelor who **kept himself to himself** and barely acknowledged Mrs Jackson's presence. The Lawsons' house was being rented by a group of young people who played loud pop music long after midnight.

There was nothing else for it. Mrs Jackson was going to have to move. She would ring the estate agent immediately.

Vocabulary Study

amnesiac

This is an adjective used in formal or technical contexts to mean unable to remember or very forgetful. In non-technical contexts, it can easily be replaced by a simpler word such as **forgetful**. Alternatively, you can reword the sentence using a verb such as **forget**:

- *Tom's old father is becoming **amnesiac**. Yesterday he went to the shops and couldn't find his way home.*
- *Tom's old father is becoming **very forgetful**. Yesterday he went to the shops and couldn't find his way home.*

Language Help

Amnesia is a medical condition in which there is loss of memory or a defect in the memory, often caused by injury or illness.

back-up and support

There is no need to use both of these words together as, in the context of the passage, they both mean assistance of some kind. One of them is, thus, redundant and you can delete either of them.

disconsolate

This is a formal word meaning sad, miserable or disappointed:

- *Lucy was **disconsolate** when she failed to get into the university of her choice.*
- *Lucy was **very disappointed** when she failed to get into the university of her choice.*

doldrums, in the doldrums

This is a cliché meaning gloomy, depressed or miserable:

- *Ben's **in the doldrums** because he cannot find a job.*
- *Ben **feels very depressed** because he cannot find a job.*

immobile

This is a word used in formal or technical contexts to mean unable to move or not moving. The sentence can be reworded in a simpler way, often by using the verb **move**:

- *Pam's elderly mother is now **immobile** and has to be lifted into a wheelchair to get outside.*
- *Pam's elderly mother **cannot move** any more and has to be lifted into a wheelchair to get outside.*

irascible

This is a formal word meaning becoming angry easily. You can substitute a simpler word such as **bad-tempered**, **quick-tempered**, **short-tempered** or **cross**, or you can reword the sentence to use a phrase such as **lose your temper easily**:

- *The old man next door is very **irascible** and shouts at the children, even when they are just playing quietly in our garden.*
- *The old man next door is very **bad-tempered** and shouts at the children, even when they are just playing quietly in our garden.*
- *The old man next door **loses his temper very easily** and shouts at the children, even when they are just playing quietly in our garden.*

keep, keep yourself to yourself

This is a cliché meaning to avoid social contact with other people. The cliché can be avoided by the use of a word such as **reserved**, **unsociable** or **uncommunicative**:

- *I haven't got to know the neighbours on the left. They seem to **keep themselves to themselves**.*
- *I haven't got to know the neighbours on the left. They seem to be **very reserved**.*

propinquity

This is a formal word meaning closeness or nearness. You can replace it with one of these or you can reword the sentence to use an adjective, such as **close** or **near**:

- *The house appealed to us because of its **propinquity** to the sea.*
- *The house appealed to us because of its **closeness** to the sea.*
- *The house appealed to us because it was so **close** to the sea.*

pugnacious

This is a formal word meaning ready to fight or quarrel with anyone. It can be replaced by a simpler word such as **quarrelsome, argumentative, belligerent** or **aggressive:**

- *Pete is quite a mild man usually, but he becomes **pugnacious** when he has had too much to drink.*
- *Pete is quite a mild man usually, but he becomes **aggressive** when he has had too much to drink.*

sanguine

This is a formal word meaning optimistic. It can be replaced by a simpler word such as **optimistic** or **positive:**

- *I am not at all **sanguine** about my chances of getting a job at my age.*
- *I am not at all **optimistic** about my chances of getting a job at my age.*

vista

This is a formal word meaning view and it can be replaced by a simpler word, such as **view** or **outlook:**

- *If you climb to the top of the castle, you will be rewarded by a beautiful **vista** of the lakes below.*
- *If you climb to the top of the castle, you will be rewarded by a beautiful **view** of the lakes below.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *Its **propinquity** to the main London railway line was rather a disadvantage.*

_____

_____

2. *One of Jack's many virtues was to be able to cheer her up when she was **in the doldrums**.*

_____

_____

3. *A few months ago, however, Mr Brown, one of the neighbours, had begun to get very **amnesiac**.*

_____

_____

4. *Mrs Brown felt in need of some family **support** and **back-up**.*

_____

5. *Mrs Jackson was **disconsolate** at the loss of her friends.*

_____

B Replace the expressions in bold in the following sentences with simpler words or expressions.

1. *Let's postpone the meeting about the merger until this afternoon. I've just got back from holiday and **I'm not up to speed** about the details yet.*

_____

_____

2. *I told Jill yesterday that she had to hand in her essay today, but she spends all her time thinking about her new boyfriend. Anything you tell her about work* ***goes in one ear and out the other.***

_____

_____

_____

3. *The match starts at 2 pm. We're* ***eager for the fray,*** *but we are facing very strong opposition.*

_____

_____

4. *I said that Mary could come and stay in our flat for a few days while she looks for accommodation, but she's arrived with all her* ***goods and chattels.***

_____

_____

5. *We had hoped to receive generous donations for the charity, but money is coming in just* ***in dribs and drabs.***

_____

_____

C Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *Amy was a _____ girl, but her two sisters were rather plain. (* ***bonny / bony*** *)*
2. *We must try to _____ these rumours about the president as quickly as possible. (* ***quash / squash*** *)*
3. *I thought that Ben was cured of his addiction, but he has begun to _____ again. (* ***gamble / gambol*** *)*
4. *Jill has bought some kind of _____ for straightening her hair. (* ***device / devise*** *)*
5. *We watched with _____ breath as the acrobat swung into the air. (* ***baited / bated*** *)*

More about Language

Agent nouns

An **agent noun** is a noun that refers to someone who carries out the action of a verb. In other words, such a person is the "doer" of the verb. It is usually spelt ending in either **-er**, as **enquirer**, or in **-or**, as **supervisor**. Frequently, either of these endings is acceptable, as **adviser/advisor**.

Exercise 2

Write down the agent noun from each of the following verbs. Where there is more than one, give both.

1. *manufacture* : _____
2. *edit* : _____
3. *exhibit* : _____
4. *advertise* : _____
5. *cultivate* : _____
6. *convert* : _____
7. *communicate* : _____
8. *decorate* : _____
9. *convey* : _____
10. *sculpt* : _____

Unit 4

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

A coffee disaster

My wife and I had an appointment to see our lawyer. Having parked the car with much more ease than usual, we discovered that we were **ahead of schedule.** Our meeting was not due to take place for another three-quarters of an hour.

We decided to go and have some refreshments in rather a charming little teashop that we used to visit frequently. However, we had not been in this part of town for some time and we were disappointed to find that the teashop was not there any longer. In its place was what appeared to be a coffee bar cum wine bar. **Truth to tell,** it didn't really look like our kind of place, but it was a case of **Hobson's choice.** We had no time to look for something more suitable.

When we went in, we discovered that the place was **devoid of** other customers. We were to discover that this was not surprising. There were two waitresses standing by the kitchen door engaged in an **animated** and **lively** discussion. Without any attempt at eavesdropping, we were able to gather that the conversation concerned a party which they had both attended the night before. They **remained oblivious** to our various attempts to get served.

Finally, I **saw red** and called out in **stentorian** tones, "Could we have some service here, please?"

"We're on our break," was the reply. "I'll get someone for you."

Shortly after, there appeared a most unattractive youth with ears that **protruded** from his head practically at right angles. We could have forgiven his unattractive appearance, which, of course, was not his fault, but we could not forgive his lack of skill as a waiter.

He mumbled something which we assumed was an enquiry as to what we would like and we ordered two white coffees. He eventually appeared with these, carrying the cups so **maladroitly** that half of the coffee had spilt into the saucers.

When he withdrew, we discovered that neither of the cups was clean and that one of them bore traces of lipstick. By this time there was no one around and so we left the appropriate money on the table and departed, leaving the coffee undrunk.

All this had taken such a long time that it was now time for our meeting. "Perhaps Mr Bennett's secretary will give us some coffee," said my wife optimistically.

animated and lively

There is no need to use both of these words together as **animated** means the same as **lively** in this context. One of them is, thus, redundant and you can delete either of them.

choice, Hobson's choice

To have **Hobson's choice** is to have no choice whatsoever. It a cliché and should not be overused:

- *I know it's a very long drive from here to Jack's holiday cottage, but it's **Hobson's choice**. There's no public transport to that area.*
- *I know it's a very long drive from here to Jack's holiday cottage, but you **don't have any choice**. There's no public transport to that area.*

Language Help

This is supposedly a reference to Tobias Hobson, who hired out horses in Cambridge in the seventeenth century. Although he had a large number of horses for hire, he always offered only the horse nearest the stable door to the would-be hirer.

devoid of

This is a formal expression meaning completely lacking in something. It can easily be replaced by a simpler expression such as **without** or **lacking in**:

- *Lucy is not **devoid of** talent as a singer, but she is not nearly good enough to be a professional opera singer.*
- *Lucy is not **without** talent as a singer, but she is not nearly good enough to be a professional opera singer.*

maladroitly

This is an adverb, used in formal contexts, meaning not skilful or graceful. It can easily be replaced by a simpler expression such as **awkwardly** or **unskilfully**:

- *Lucy was not used to answering the telephone in the office and she dealt rather **maladroitly** with calls of complaint.*
- *Lucy was not used to answering the telephone in the office and she dealt rather **unskilfully** with calls of complaint.*

oblivious, remain oblivious

This is a formal expression meaning to go on being unaware or ignorant of something. It can be replaced by either of these expressions:

- *Police were amazed that Ben's parents had **remained oblivious** to the fact that he was taking drugs for so long, although it was obvious to other people.*
- *Police were amazed that Ben's parents had **continued to be ignorant** of the fact that he was taking drugs for so long, although it was obvious to other people.*

protrude

This is a formal word meaning to stick out from somewhere. The word can easily be replaced by a simpler expression, such as **stick out** or **jut out**:

- *When the police found the body, there was a dagger **protruding** from a wound in the chest.*
- *When the police found the body, there was a dagger **sticking out** from a wound in the chest.*

red, see red

This is an idiom which has become a cliché. It is used in informal contexts and means to become extremely angry. It can be replaced by an expression such as **get furious** or **lose one's temper**:

- *Ken's cruel treatment of Lucy makes us all see **red**, but she refuses to leave him.*
- *Ken's cruel treatment of Lucy makes us all **very angry** but she refuses to leave him.*

schedule, ahead of schedule

This is a formal way of saying early and the expression can easily be replaced by a simpler word or by the expression **ahead of time**:

- *The bridge is due to be finished by the end of July, but we are hopeful that it will be completed **ahead of schedule**.*
- *The bridge is due to be finished by the end of July, but we are hopeful that it will be completed **ahead of time**.*

stentorian

This is a formal word meaning very loud:

- *The preacher told the congregation in **stentorian** tones that sinners would all go to hell.*

- *The preacher told the congregation in extremely **powerful** tones that sinners would all go to hell.*

truth, truth to tell

This expression is a cliché which is sometimes used to emphasize the truth of what is being said, but which is frequently used meaninglessly. In the context of the passage, it can safely be omitted with no change of meaning.

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *We discovered that we were **ahead of schedule**.*

_____

2. *It didn't really look like our kind of place, but it was a case of **Hobson's choice**.*

_____

3. *They **remained oblivious** to our various attempts to get served.*

_____

4. *Finally, I **saw red** and called out in **stentorian** tones, "Could we have some service here, please?"*

_____

_____

5. *He eventually appeared with these, carrying the cups so **maladroitly** that half of the coffee had spilt into the saucers.*

_____

_____

B Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. _____ *punishment is illegal in the country and the man was charged with beating his son. (* ***Capital / Corporal*** *)*
2. *He was a priest and he had promised to abstain from* _____ *pleasures. (* ***fleshly / fleshy*** *)*
3. *The children were in a state of* _____ *excitement as they opened their presents on Christmas morning. (* ***intense / intensive*** *)*
4. *Our host offered us a range of* _____ *after dinner, but most of them were very sweet and I had a glass of brandy. (* ***liqueurs / liquors*** *)*
5. *Young people have a liking for fast food that is often of little* _____ *value. (* ***nutritional / nutritious*** *)*

C Rewrite the following sentences, omitting any redundant words.

1. *I'm surprised that you haven't heard by now that Sue won the prize because she's been bragging and crowing about it all over the school.*

_____

_____

2. *The man admits to the murder of the old woman, but he claims that he was of unsound mind and unbalanced at the time.*

_____

_____

3. *Frank had sustained head injuries in the car crash and so he was able to give only a hazy account which was rather imprecise.*

_____

_____

4. *All the parents enjoyed the children's concert, but those who had been to previous ones found it a bit samey and lacking in variety.*

_____

_____

5. *We have no objections to Bill being interested in politics, but we get bored when he starts haranguing the government and delivering tirades against it.*

_____

_____

Spelling "ie"

In words containing the letters **ie** written together when the vowel is pronounced **ee**, the letter **i** usually comes before the letter **e**: **chief**, **believe**.

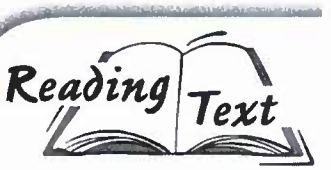
However, the **e** comes before the **i** after the letter **c**: **conceit**. There are a few exceptions to the rule, such as **weird**.

Exercise 2

Rewrite whichever of the following words are misspelt.

1. *sieve* : _____
2. *cieling* : _____
3. *niece* : _____
4. *hiefer* : _____
5. *sieze* : _____
6. *liesure* : _____
7. *brief* : _____
8. *conceivable* : _____
9. *deceit* : _____
10. *seige* : _____

Unit 5



Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

Deprived of a part

Dear Amy

Remember I told you that I had been asked to audition for the part of Cordelia in the college's end-of-term production of *King Lear*? I was **over the moon** when I was asked. From what my drama tutor said, I was practically a **shoo-in** for the part.

The audition was two weeks ago, but I wasn't there. Instead, I was in bed with mumps and that **put the kibosh on** the audition! I **wept buckets**, but there was absolutely nothing I could do about it. I could hardly audition for Cordelia with a face the size of a balloon. On the other hand, there was no question of the auditions being postponed just for me. That wouldn't have been fair.

Life is **the pits**. I was so looking forward to playing Cordelia. I know it's a part that I could **get my teeth into** and it would really have given a tremendous boost to my career. To make matters worse, the part has gone to Joan Robertson. I **had a fit** when I was told the news. She's definitely **bitten off more than she can chew**. She **can't act for toffee** and Cordelia's a challenging role.

I was so disappointed and I was in great pain, too. My whole head and neck hurt and I looked terrible. The pain's gone now, but I'm feeling **down in the dumps**. The doctor says that it's quite common to suffer from depression immediately after a viral infection. He said that I should be **my old self** within a couple of weeks. If I go on feeling depressed for any length of time, he will prescribe something to make me feel better. The only thing that would make me feel better doesn't come out of a bottle of pills. It's the part of Cordelia in the drama college production and that's something the doctor can't give me. Nobody can.

Students from the drama college quite often present short plays at the local schools. Unfortunately, I was at the local primary school when there was an outbreak of mumps there. I wasn't really worried, because I assumed that I had either had all the usual childhood illnesses or been vaccinated against them, but obviously not. There was no point in asking my mother, because you know how vague she is. I found out the hard way that I hadn't had mumps.

I'll write again when I feel more cheerful.

Love

Emma

Vocabulary Study

bite, bite off more than you can chew

This is an idiom which has become a cliché. It means that you have undertaken more than you are likely to be able to deal with effectively. The expression is much overused:

- *Frank and Anne bought an old house, intending to renovate and sell it at a profit. However, they discovered that the house was in very bad condition and that they had* ***bitten off more than they could chew.***
- *Frank and Anne bought an old house, intending to renovate and sell it at a profit. However, they discovered that the house was in very bad condition and that the problem was* ***too difficult for them to deal with.***

bucket, weep buckets

This is a cliché, used in informal contexts, meaning to weep a great deal:

- *When she saw that the car had run over her dog, Anne* ***wept buckets.***
- *When she saw that the car had run over her dog, Anne* ***cried a great deal.***

dumps, down in the dumps

This is a cliché, used in informal contexts, which means depressed, gloomy or unhappy:

- *Mary's been* ***down in the dumps*** *since her best friend moved to another town.*
- *Mary's been* ***miserable*** *since her best friend moved to another town.*

fit, have a fit

This is an informal expression meaning to be very angry:

- *Dad will* ***have a fit*** *when he sees the damage to his car.*
- *Dad will* ***be furious*** *when he sees the damage to his car.*

kibosh, put the kibosh on

This is an informal expression meaning to prevent something from happening or from being successful:

- *The heavy rain* ***put the kibosh on*** *our plans to have a barbecue in the garden.*
- *The heavy rain* ***put a stop to*** *our plans to have a barbecue in the garden.*

moon, over the moon

This is an idiom which has become a cliché. It is used in informal contexts and means extremely happy about something:

- *Mary has just discovered that she is pregnant and she is* ***over the moon*** *about it.*
- *Mary has just discovered that she is pregnant and she is* ***overjoyed*** *about it.*

old, your old self

This is an informal expression used to mean to be like you were before or to have recovered from something:

- *Jim had a nervous breakdown last year, but he's now* ***his old self.***
- *Jim had a nervous breakdown last year, but he's* ***better*** *now.*

pits, the

This is a slang expression meaning the worst possible thing or something extremely unpleasant:

- *The way Tom treated Jill was* ***the pits*** *and yet she forgave him.*
- *The way Tom treated Jill was* ***very nasty*** *and yet she forgave him.*

shoo-in

This is an informal word meaning someone who is expected to win easily:

- *You're a* ***shoo-in*** *for the job. You've got all the right qualifications.*
- *You're* ***bound to*** *get the job. You've got all the right qualifications.*

teeth, get your teeth into

This is an idiom which has become a cliché. It is used in informal contexts and means to begin to do something with energy and enthusiasm, usually because it interests you. The same idea can easily be expressed in standard language:

- *Pete says that his present job is too easy and boring. He wants a more challenging job that he can* ***get his teeth into.***
- *Pete says that his present job is too easy and boring. He wants a more challenging job that he can* ***tackle with enthusiasm.***

toffee, can't do something for toffee
If you **can't do something for toffee**, it means that you are very bad at doing something:

- *I would offer to cook the meal tonight, but I* ***can't cook for toffee.***
- *I would offer to cook the meal tonight, but I'm* ***hopeless at cooking.***
- *I would offer to cook the meal tonight, but I'm* ***a hopeless cook.***

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *I was* ***over the moon*** *when I was asked to audition for the part of Cordelia in the college's end-of-term production of* King Lear.

   _____

   _____

2. *Instead, I was in bed with mumps and that* ***put the kibosh on*** *the audition!*

   _____

   _____

3. *I know it's a part that I could* ***get my teeth into*** *and it would really have given a tremendous boost to my career.*

   _____

   _____

4. *The pain's gone now, but I'm feeling* ***down in the dumps.***

   _____

5. *He said that I should be* ***my old self*** *within a couple of weeks.*

   _____

B Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *The old town was a maze of narrow,* _____ *streets. (* ***tortuous / torturous*** *)*
2. *We must clean the old man's wound or it will turn* _____ *. (* ***sceptic / septic*** *)*
3. *We* _____ *the flies with rolled-up newspapers. (* ***swatted / swotted*** *)*
4. *Anne sang in the* _____ *which the students put on at the end of term. (* ***review / revue*** *)*
5. *All political meetings are* _____ *by the tyrant. (* ***prescribed / proscribed*** *)*

C Tick the idiom that is similar in meaning to the phrase in bold in each sentence.

1. *It's a good thing to leave home when you go to college. It teaches you to* ***be independent.***
   a. *plough a lonely furrow* ☐ c. *keep your head above water* ☐
   b. *stand on your own two feet* ☐ d. *put your best foot forward* ☐
2. *We've been talking about the problem for weeks. Now we have to* ***deal with it decisively.***
   a. *put the boot in* ☐ c. *take the bull by the horns* ☐
   b. *cut to the chase* ☐ d. *close up shop* ☐
3. *It is hard work taking an evening course in languages while you have a full-time job as a secretary, but it will* ***bring advantages.*** *You'll have more job opportunities.*
   a. *pay dividends* ☐ c. *hit the nail on the head* ☐
   b. *put you on the map* ☐ d. *have got it made* ☐
4. *It was a very difficult problem, but now you have* ***dealt with the difficulty successfully.***
   a. *rest on your oars* ☐ c. *put your knife in* ☐
   b. *clear the hurdle* ☐ d. *flog a dead horse* ☐
5. ***Don't be in such a hurry!*** *We haven't had time to discuss the situation properly.*
   a. *keep your wits about you* ☐ c. *hold your horses!* ☐
   b. *think on your feet* ☐ d. *put your thinking cap on* ☐

Active and passive voice

The **active voice** is one of the two voices that verbs are divided into. The other is the **passive voice.** With verbs in the active voice, commonly called **active verbs,** the subject of the verb is the performer of the action described by the verb. For example:

The boy ***threw*** *the ball.*
We ***saw*** *the man on the roof.*

In the first sentence the verb *throw* is in the active voice, since the subject of the verb (*the boy*) is doing the throwing. In the second sentence the verb *see* is in the

active voice since the subject of the sentence (*we*) is doing the seeing. These two sentences can be put into the passive voice as:

*The ball **was thrown** by the boy.*
*The man on the roof **was seen** by us.*

In the **passive voice**, the subject of the verb is the recipient of the action of the verb:

*The footballer **was kicked** by one of the opposing team.*

The verb *kick* is in the passive voice, since the subject of the sentence, *the footballer*, is the recipient of the action of the verb *kick*. This sentence can be put into the active voice as:

*One of the opposing team **kicked** the footballer.*

Exercise 2

A Write down whether each of the following sentences contains a verb in the active or a verb in the passive voice.

1. *Henry was extremely disappointed by his lack of success.* _____
2. *The dog was killed by the speeding car.* _____
3. *His poor living conditions badly affected the old man's health.* _____
4. *All the students attended the sports event.* _____
5. *Jim and the rest of the team were cheered on by the fans.* _____

B The following sentences contain verbs in the passive voice. Rewrite them so that they are in the active voice.

1. *Jack was attacked by a man with a knife.*

_____

2. *The car was being driven by the owner's wife.*

_____

3. *The house on the hill was built by a local builder.*

_____

4. *The lyrics of the song were written by the musician's brother.*

_____

5. *The gruesome murder is still being investigated by the police.*

_____

Unit 6

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

Nowhere to live

Homelessness continues to be a major problem, even in the wealthiest, most highly developed countries. It is a problem that society simply must solve, but many cities are **fighting a losing battle** in trying to do so.

Some **city fathers** try to **sweep** the problem **under the carpet**, although they are perfectly well aware of the extent of the problem. They **conjecture** that people sleeping rough in the city centre will **militate against** their many campaigns to attract tourists. Some city councils even try to **debar** homeless people from making temporary homes of cardboard boxes, newspapers and old coats on city streets.

Such action, of course, in no way **alleviates** the homeless situation. It simply drives it to other parts of the city, where the problem is not so obvious to people who would like to ignore the whole issue. It is a case of out of sight, out of mind.

There are many members of the general public, also, who would prefer not to think about the plight of homeless people. It seems to make them feel better if they can convince themselves that all homeless people have brought the situation upon themselves. They say that all homeless people are either people who are guilty of **substance abuse** or people who are alcoholics.

While it is true that many homeless people have a drug or drink problem, they are really more in need of help, rather than condemnation. Sometimes, their addictions are the result of difficult social situations and it is difficult to break an addiction without a lot of assistance—and somewhere to live.

Not all homeless people are drug addicts or alcoholics. Some are experiencing temporary periods of misfortune because of some family, work or financial problem. Perhaps they have gone through a difficult divorce; perhaps they suddenly lost their jobs and could not meet their financial obligations; perhaps they got into debt and had their house repossessed because they could no longer pay their mortgage.

Many of them would like to make a fresh start, but it is difficult to get a job, or even receive benefits, if you are **of no fixed abode**. In such a difficult situation, it is all too easy to fall into a state of despair and inactivity.

Every member of society should **address themselves to** the problem of homelessness. In this affluent, modern age, we should all feel a deep sense of shame that there are people with no roof over their heads.

abode, of no fixed abode

The word **abode** is a formal word referring to where someone lives. If someone is **of no fixed abode**, it means that they have nowhere permanent to live. It is used in formal or legal contexts and can be replaced by a simpler expression, such as **homeless**, or a reference to **sleeping rough**:

- *Police tried to find out where the old man lived, but, apparently, he is **of no fixed abode**.*
- *Police tried to find out where the old man lived, but, apparently, he is **homeless**.*
- *Police tried to find out where the old man lived, but, apparently, he **sleeps rough**.*

abuse, substance abuse

This is a formal expression meaning the excessive use of, or addiction to, drugs, particularly drugs which are not taken for medical reasons and which are often illegal:

- *The youth is suffering from **substance abuse** and has been stealing to pay for his habit.*
- *The youth is suffering from **drug addiction** and has been stealing to pay for his habit.*
- *The youth is a **drug addict** and has been stealing to pay for his habit.*

address yourself to

This is a formal expression meaning to consider how you are going to deal with a problem, issue or situation. It can easily be replaced by a simpler expression such as **consider**, **give some thought to** or **think about**:

- *It is time to tear up your credit cards and **address yourself to** the problem of paying off your debts.*
- *It is time to tear up your credit cards and **give some thought to** the problem of paying off your debts.*

alleviate

This is a formal expression meaning to make something less bad or severe:

- *The area is suffering from famine and drought and nothing is being done to **alleviate** this terrible situation.*
- *The area is suffering from famine and drought and nothing is being done to **improve** this terrible situation.*
- *The doctor has prescribed something to **alleviate** the patient's pain.*
- *The doctor has prescribed something to **make** the patient's pain **less severe**.*

battle, fight a losing battle

This is an idiom which has become a cliché. It is used to emphasize how little success someone is having at trying to achieve something. The cliché can be replaced by an expression from standard language which indicates how hopeless or unsuccessful an attempt of some kind is:

- *Local medical staff are doing their best to keep the epidemic in check, but they are **fighting a losing battle**. The disease is spreading rapidly and the hospital is short of resources.*
- *Local medical staff are doing their best to keep the epidemic in check, but **the situation is becoming hopeless**. The disease is spreading rapidly and the hospital is short of resources.*
- *Local medical staff are doing their best to keep the epidemic in check, but **their efforts are unsuccessful**. The disease is spreading rapidly and the hospital is short of resources.*

carpet, sweep something under the carpet

This is an idiom which has become a cliché. It is used to indicate that someone is trying to ignore or forget about a problem or issue:

- *Some parents claim that there is a major bullying problem in the school and that some of the teachers are trying to **sweep it under the carpet**.*
- *Some parents claim that there is a major bullying problem in the school and that some of the teachers are **deliberately paying no attention to it**.*

conjecture

This is a formal word meaning to form an opinion about something, even though you do not have enough information to do so. It can be replaced by a simpler word or expression, such as **guess**:

- *Police have been unable to establish a definite motive for the murder, but they **conjecture** that the murdered woman disturbed a burglar and was killed.*

- *Police have been unable to establish a definite motive for the murder, but they are **hazarding a guess** that the murdered woman disturbed a burglar and was killed.*

debar

This is a formal word meaning to prevent or forbid someone from doing something. It can easily be replaced by a simpler word, such as **prevent, forbid, bar** or **prohibit**:

- *The athlete has tested positive for an illegal drug and has been **debarred** from taking part in international contests.*
- *The athlete has tested positive for an illegal drug and has been **forbidden** to take part in international contests.*

father, city father

This is rather an old-fashioned expression, usually used in formal contexts, meaning a member of a city or town council. The more usual term in modern language is **councillor**:

- *The **city fathers** intend to extend parking restrictions in the area.*
- *The **city councillors** intend to extend parking restrictions in the area.*

militate, militate against

This is a formal expression meaning to make it difficult or impossible for something to happen:

- *Jim is due for retirement in a few years and his age may **militate against** his promotion.*
- *Jim is due for retirement in a few years and his age may **count against** his promotion.*
- *The fact that Jill has no formal qualifications **militates against** her chances of getting a job, despite her enthusiasm.*
- *The fact that Jill has no formal qualifications is a **barrier against** her chances of getting a job, despite her enthusiasm.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *It is a problem that society simply must solve, but many cities are **fighting a losing battle** in trying to do so.*

_____

_____

2. *Some **city fathers** try to **sweep** the problem **under the carpet**, although they are perfectly well aware of the extent of the problem.*

_____

_____

3. *They **conjecture** that people sleeping rough in the city centre will **militate against** their many campaigns to attract tourists.*

_____

_____

4. *Such action, of course, in no way **alleviates** the homeless situation.*

_____

5. *They say that all homeless people are either people who are guilty of* ***substance abuse*** *or people who are alcoholics.*

_____

_____

B Fill in the word missing from the idiom in each sentence.

1. *I don't know whether the directors will like the idea for the publicity campaign, but I'm going to* ***run it up the*** _____ .
2. *Meg seems very cross recently and* ***flies off the*** _____ *when the slightest thing annoys her.*
3. *I have a slight cold and I* ***have a*** _____ ***in my throat.***
4. *If you want to make sure that people don't steal from your shop, you need to* ***have eyes in the*** _____ ***of your head.***
5. *It's not very far from here to my family home* ***as the*** _____ ***flies,*** *but it will take several hours by public transport.*

C Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *There were many other* _____ *, as well as ornithologists, at the conference.* (***naturalists / naturists***)
2. *Most of the girls were wearing pale-coloured summer dresses, but Meg was wearing a* _____ *orange top and jeans.* (***livid / lurid***)
3. *When the miser died, they found a* _____ *of gold coins under the floorboards of the cellar.* (***hoard / horde***)
4. *The prime minister was very efficient and confident when he first took office, but he seems to be* _____ *now.* (***floundering / foundering***)
5. *Many children are* _____ *of the dark.* (***fearful / fearsome***)

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is a figure of speech referring to the formation of words that imitate the sound associated with an object or action. For example:

*We heard the **hiss** of the snake before we saw it.*
*The **clatter** of pots and pans from the hotel kitchen frightened the cat.*
*The **twittering** of the birds woke us early in the morning.*

The words **hiss, clatter** and **twittering** are all examples of onomatopoeia.

Exercise 2

Write down whichever words in the following sentences are examples of onomatopoeia.

1. *I heard the click of the garden gate and then someone rattled the door knocker.*

   _____

2. *There was a loud crash as the heavy wardrobe fell to the floor.*

   _____

3. *We placed a bowl under the leak in the roof and the rainwater plopped into it.*

   _____

4. *With a swish of the curtains the show opened.* _____
5. *Suddenly we heard the tinkle of breaking glass.* _____
6. *We crunched across the crisp snow to get to the icy car park and then slithered across it to get to the car.* _____
7. *Flags fluttered from the windows of some of the houses.* _____
8. *Something rustled in the undergrowth and he heard the crack of a pistol.*

   _____

9. *The gates clanged and Bill was a prisoner.* _____
10. *The child laughed as the bathwater gurgled down the drain.* _____

Unit 7

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

The dangers of pleasure

We have grown used to the depressing fact that many of the things that we enjoy are bad for our health. The more sensible among us take note of this fact and adjust our lifestyles accordingly. Others, however, ignore all the health advice and go on **taking their lives in their hands**.

It seems to take an **inordinate** amount of time for even quite sensible people to respond to **menacing** health **threats**. For example, doctors have been warning us for years that smoking causes **pulmonary** problems. Yet, it is only comparatively recently that many smokers have decided to **kick** the habit in the interests of their health.

In recent times, we have been warned that over-consumption of fatty and sugary foods, and of sweet, soft drinks is causing an alarming number of cases of obesity. Valiant attempts are being made to persuade people to replace at least some of these foods with fruit and vegetables, but the message is all too often **falling on deaf ears**. Hopefully, people will eventually **see the error of their ways** and change their eating habits in the interests of their health.

Even more worrying than the fact that people are disregarding valuable dietary advice is the fact that they are ignoring the dangers of over-exposure to the sun. Perhaps they feel that something so natural as the sun cannot possibly be harmful. If they do think this, they are dangerously wrong. Over-exposure to the harmful ultraviolet light of the sun is now known to cause skin cancer and the number of cases of skin cancer is rising rapidly.

There are several suggested reasons for the increased incidence of skin cancer. One of these is the fact that airline travel has become so cheap that more and more people are taking more and more holidays in the sun. People of certain skin types, especially those with very fair skin, are more likely to suffer the harmful effects from the sun than others. Yet, they often get off the plane, check in at their hotel and **hare off** to the nearest beach or pool where they lie all day, intent on getting a suntan as soon as possible. This is **a recipe for disaster**.

The message for fair-skinned sun-lovers is simple. Use a high-factor sunscreen, stay in the shade when the sun is at its hottest and lie in the sun for only short periods of time. But will they pay any attention to the message?

Vocabulary Study

deaf, fall on deaf ears

This is a cliché which means to be completely ignored or disregarded, indicating that the person concerned does not wish to hear or take any notice of what is being said:

- *I felt that I should have tried to dissuade Anne from going out with Mike, but I knew that my advice would* ***fall on deaf ears*** *and so I said nothing.*
- *I felt that I should have tried to dissuade Anne from going out with Mike, but I knew that my advice would* ***be ignored*** *and so I said nothing.*

disaster, a recipe for disaster

This is a cliché which means something that is very likely to have a very bad or unfortunate ending:

- *If Lucy marries John, it will be* ***a recipe for disaster****. They have absolutely nothing in common and have totally different ideas.*
- *If Lucy marries John, it is* ***bound to end badly****. They have absolutely nothing in common and have totally different ideas.*
- *If Lucy marries John, it will certainly have* ***an unfortunate ending****. They have absolutely nothing in common and have totally different ideas.*

error, see the error of your ways

This is a cliché meaning to realize or admit that you have made a mistake or behaved badly:

- *Putting young people in prison as a punishment for wrongdoing does not do much good unless they can be made to* ***see the error of their ways****.*
- *Putting young people in prison as a punishment for wrongdoing does not do much good unless they can be made to* ***admit that they have done wrong****.*
- *Jill went to a great many parties during her first year at university and did hardly any work, but she* ***saw the error of her ways*** *when she failed her first-year exams and started to study hard.*
- *Jill went to a great many parties during her first year at university and did hardly any work, but she* ***realized that she wasn't doing the right thing*** *when she failed her first-year exams and started to study hard.*

hare, hare off

This is an informal expression meaning to go somewhere very fast. It can be replaced by an expression such as **hurry off**, or a synonym for this:

- *Most of the students* ***hared off*** *immediately after the lecture in order to catch the last bus.*
- *Most of the students* ***rushed off*** *immediately after the lecture in order to catch the last bus.*

inordinate

This is a formal word meaning considerably more than is usual, expected or necessary. It can be replaced by a simpler word, such as **excessive**:

- *All teenage girls seem to spend an* ***inordinate*** *amount of time on the phone.*
- *All teenage girls seem to spend an* ***excessive*** *amount of time on the phone.*

kick

This is an informal word meaning, in the context of the passage, to stop doing something harmful that you have been doing for some time. It can be replaced by a simpler expression such as **give up**:

- *Tom has tried to* ***kick*** *smoking several times, but he still smokes 20 cigarettes a day.*
- *Tom has tried to* ***give up*** *smoking several times, but he still smokes 20 cigarettes a day.*

life, take your life in your hands

This is an idiom which has become a cliché. It means to do something very risky or dangerous:

- *You'll be* ***taking your life in your hands*** *if you let Ben drive you to the station. He's a very bad driver and his car's an old wreck.*
- *You'll be* ***taking a great risk*** *if you let Ben drive you to the station. He's a very bad driver and his car's an old wreck.*

menacing and threat

The word **menacing** means **threatening** and the sentence also contains the word **threat**. Thus, the word **menacing** is redundant and so can be deleted.

pulmonary
This is a formal or technical word meaning connected with the lungs:

- *The girl who was pulled from the burning building was later found to be suffering from smoke inhalation which caused **pulmonary** damage.*
- *The girl who was pulled from the burning building was later found to be suffering from smoke inhalation which caused **lung** damage.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *Others, however, ignore all the health advice and go on **taking their lives in their hands**.*

_____

_____

2. *It seems to take an **inordinate** amount of time for even quite sensible people to respond to **menacing** health **threats**.*

_____

_____

3. *Valiant attempts are being made to persuade people to replace at least some of these foods with fruit and vegetables, but the message is all too often **falling on deaf ears**.*

_____

_____

_____

4. *Hopefully, people will eventually **see the error of their ways** and change their eating habits in the interests of their health.*

_____

_____

5. *This is **a recipe for disaster**.*

_____

B Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *It was a _____ delivery, but mother and baby are both well. (**breach / breech**)*
2. *She has a _____ on her finger from digging the garden. (**callous / callus**)*
3. *Jim had a _____ career as a young man, but he is now an established, respectable businessman. (**checked / chequered**)*

4. *The aim of the charity is to provide _____ children with summer holidays.* (***disadvantageous / disadvantaged***)

5. *Lucy's decision to take a creative writing course proved to be a _____ one as it led to the end of her marriage.* (***fatal / fateful***)

C Replace the expressions in bold in the following sentences with simpler words or expressions.

1. *There's a queue of customers* ***champing at the bit*** *to get in to get at the sales goods.*

_____

_____

2. *I prefer to* ***call a spade a spade*** *and say that Mike is a liar.*

_____

3. *Jack wanted to* ***die in harness,*** *but he was forced to retire at the age of 60 when he was still very healthy.*

_____

_____

4. *I'm* ***at a loose end*** *today. I'll be happy to help you tidy up your garden.*

_____

_____

5. *The pop singer likes the attention of the press but she is anxious that they don't find out about her* ***skeleton in the cupboard.***

_____

_____

"nice"

Some words in English are very much overused and one of the most overused is **nice**. You should look for a substitute for it if you find yourself using it frequently.

The following are some synonyms for the various meanings:

nice 1 (*of weather*) fine, lovely, warm, sunny, fair, dry 2 (*of scenery, views, etc*) picturesque, beautiful, lovely, attractive 3 (*of a form of entertainment*) enjoyable, pleasant, amusing, delightful, fun (*informal*) 4 (*of accommodation, etc*) pleasant, comfortable 5 (*of a person*) kind, generous, thoughtful, helpful, pleasant, amiable 6 (*of clothes*) smart, stylish 7 (*of food*) delicious, appetizing, tasty, scrumptious 8 (*of a difference, etc*) fine, subtle, fine-drawn, minute 9 (*of a job, etc*) good, fine, competent, efficient, accomplished, excellent, friendly, charming.

Exercise 2

Replace the word *nice* with a suitable word in brackets.

A drive in the country

It was a **nice** *(_____) day, unusual for this time of year, and my husband and I decided to go for a drive. We drove up into the hills and stopped for a while to admire the* **nice** *(_____) view of the valley below.*

Shortly after that, we felt hungry and started looking for somewhere to have lunch. Some years previously, we had stayed in a **nice** *(_____), small hotel in the area and we thought we would go there and see if they served lunch to non-residents.*

Fortunately they did, and we were led into the dining room by a very **nice** *(_____) young woman who was the hotel manager. They had decorated the dining room and we both agreed that they had made a very* **nice** *(_____) job of it. The hotel had obviously gone upmarket since our last visit and we were glad that we were wearing reasonably* **nice** *(_____) clothes. On Saturdays we usually wore jeans and old sweaters.*

We had a very **nice** *(_____) meal and then had coffee in the hotel lounge. By this time, it was getting rather late and we set off on the journey home. We had had a very* **nice** *(_____) day, although we felt slightly guilty, because we really should have spent the day tidying up the garden.*

Unit 8

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

Herbal medicine threat

Experts on climate change have recently suggested that around a quarter of the world's land plants and animals may be wiped out in 50 years' time if something is not done to **constrain** the damaging effect of global warming. This is **perturbing** news, but climate change, with the resultant change to habitats, is not the only threat to their survival that animals and plants face. In some cases, the behaviour of human beings is **imperilling** their existence.

We are probably more aware of the damage done to animals than to plants. Even the very earliest of human beings were hunters, relying on animals for food and clothing. Later, some animals were hunted for commercial gain, as elephants for ivory. In time, the scale of this hunting **got out of hand** and there began to be a number of endangered species. Legislation is often in place now to **delimit** or **proscribe** such hunting, but it is difficult to **implement** this effectively.

Less attention has been paid to the effect of human activity on plants. Yet, for many years people have been **plundering** and **raiding** woods, fields and river banks for wild flowers, such as snowdrops and daffodils, to take home and transplant to their gardens. A boost in popularity in gardening has seen a corresponding increase in wild-flower gathering, roots and all. Most viewers rush to garden centres for material for their instant garden, but some rush to the countryside.

It is not only gardeners who pose a threat to plants. According to environmentalists, thousands of species of wild plants are being wiped out because of an increase in the popularity of herbal medicine. The plants are being over-harvested.

The statistics are alarming and many **proponents** of herbal medicine will be shocked to hear that their favoured form of healing is having such a devastating effect on the world's **flora**. It has been reported that up to one-fifth of the species which are used in the herbal medicine industry are being harvested to the point of extinction. Two-thirds of the plants used in herbal medicine are still harvested in the wild, rather than being specially cultivated.

The problem is likely to get worse unless mass cultivation of some of these plants begins. More and more people are turning to herbal medicine as an alternative to conventional medicine, partly because of the side effects associated with some of the treatments involved. But our plant life is paying a terrible price for this.

constrain

This is a formal word meaning to **limit** or **restrict**. Either of these simpler words or a synonym for them can be used instead of the formal word:

- *The architect's design for the new building is bound to be **constrained** by the tightness of the building budget.*
- *The architect's design for the new building is bound to be **limited** by the tightness of the building budget.*
- *It is important that formal art lessons do not **constrain** the natural creativity or imagination of the children.*
- *It is important that formal art lessons do not **restrict** the natural creativity or imagination of the children.*

delimit

This is a formal word meaning to fix the limits of something:

- *Residents feel that the police should take more vigorous action against the teenage thugs, but the law **delimits** the power of the police in such circumstances.*
- *Residents feel that the police should take more vigorous action against the teenage thugs, but the law **establishes the limits** of police power in such circumstances.*

flora

This is a formal or technical word meaning **plants** and it can be replaced by the simpler word, or by the phrase **plant life**, in non-technical contexts:

- *Mike is interested in botany and is looking for a book on the **flora** of Australia.*
- *Mike is interested in botany and is looking for a book on the **plant life** of Australia.*

hand, get out of hand

This is a cliché which indicates that a situation is no longer manageable. The cliché can be replaced by an expression such as **get out of control** or **become unmanageable**:

- *Some of the marchers were using violence and police were concerned that the protest was **getting out of hand**.*
- *Some of the marchers were using violence and police were concerned that the protest was **getting out of control**.*

imperil

This is a formal word meaning to put in danger. It can be replaced by an expression such as **endanger**, **put in danger** or **put at risk**:

- *People who drink and drive **imperil** other people's lives.*
- *People who drink and drive **put at risk** other people's lives.*

implement

This is a formal word meaning to put something into effect or action:

- *The school authorities have drawn up a bullying strategy, but it has yet to be **implemented**.*
- *The school authorities have drawn up a bullying strategy, but it has yet to be **put into effect**.*
- *We do not plan to **implement** the suggested changes to the timetable until next term.*
- *We do not plan to **put** the suggested changes to the timetable **into operation** until next term.*

perturbing

This is a formal word meaning giving rise to worry or concern. It can be replaced by a simpler word such as **worrying**, **disturbing** or **alarming**:

- *It is **perturbing** that there is still no news of the missing climber.*
- *It is **worrying** that there is still no news of the missing climber.*

proponent

This is a formal word meaning someone who supports an idea or course of action. It can be replaced by a simpler word, such as **supporter**, **backer**, **advocate** or **promoter**, or the sentence can be reworded using a verb:

- *The MP is a **proponent** of free further education for all.*
- *The MP is a **supporter** of free further education for all.*
- *The MP **promotes** free further education for all.*

proscribe

This is a formal word meaning to forbid something. It can be replaced by a simpler word such as **forbid** or **ban**:

- *This is a list of the drugs which have been **proscribed** by the Athletics Federation.*
- *This is a list of the drugs which have been **banned** by the Athletics Federation.*
- *The dictator has **proscribed** all political meetings.*
- *The dictator has **forbidden** all political meetings.*

Language help

This word should not be confused with **prescribe**, which means to tell someone to take a particular medicine or follow a particular course of treatment:

- *The doctor prescribed a week's course of antibiotics for John's chest complaint.*

raid and **plunder**

These words have similar meanings in the context of the passage in that both refer to taking something illegally, and sometimes by force, from somewhere. One of the words is redundant and you can delete either of them.

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *In some cases, the behaviour of human beings is **imperilling** the existence of plants and animals.*

_____

_____

2. *In time, the scale of this hunting **got out of hand** and there began to be a number of endangered species.*

_____

_____

3. *Legislation is often in place now to **delimit** or **proscribe** such hunting, but it is difficult to **implement** this effectively.*

_____

_____

4. *For many years people have been **plundering** and **raiding** woods, fields and river banks for wild flowers to take home and transplant to their gardens.*

_____

_____

5. *The statistics are alarming and many **proponents** of herbal medicine will be shocked to hear that their favoured form of healing is having such a devastating effect on the world's **flora**.*

_____

_____

_____

B Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *He signed the hotel register with a _____ name. (* ***fictional / fictitious*** *)*
2. *It was _____ of Jim to think that we would ask him to our wedding. We don't know him very well. (* ***presumptive / presumptuous*** *)*
3. *George doesn't usually care how he treats other people, but he seems to be suffering from an _____ attack of conscience. (* ***unwanted / unwonted*** *)*
4. *We thought that the old lady had a reasonable diet, but doctors have found that she is _____ in vitamins. (* ***defective / deficient*** *)*
5. *They have come from America to do some research on a _____ from this area. (* ***forbear / forebear*** *)*

C Rewrite the following sentences, replacing each word or expression in bold with a simpler word or expression.

1. *We had hoped to go for a walk round the lake after lunch, but the weather was too* ***inclement****.*

_____

_____

2. *Our husbands were engaged in a serious* ***colloquy*** *and did not notice that we had got up to leave the room.*

_____

_____

3. *Mary has an* ***eclectic*** *range of interests, but her husband is only interested in cars.*

_____

_____

D Rewrite the following sentences, replacing the colloquial or slang words with standard words or expressions.

1. *Don't listen to Tom when he talks about education. He talks a lot of* ***guff****.*

_____

_____

2. *If you want to play in the tennis tournament, write your* ***moniker*** *on this list.*

_____

_____

More about Language

"-ology"

The suffix **-ology** is derived from Greek *logos*, a word or speech, and means the **study of**, as **biology**, the study of living organisms, and **geology**, the study of the physical structure and substance of the earth. There are many words in English with this suffix.

The suffix **-ology** also has another, less common meaning. It indicates some characteristic of speech or language or a type of language, as **tautology**, the saying of the same thing twice in different words.

Exercise 2

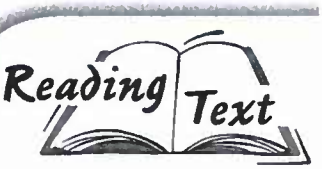
A Give the meanings of the following words.

1. *terminology* : _____
2. *pharmacology* : _____
3. *phraseology* : _____
4. *pathology* : _____
5. *ornithology* : _____

B Write down the words of which the following are the meanings.

1. *the scientific study of the weather* _____
2. *the scientific study of the nervous system and nervous disorders* _____
3. *the scientific study of the mind and its influence on behaviour* _____
4. *the scientific study of the nature of god and religious beliefs* _____
5. *the scientific study of animals* _____

Unit 9



Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

A fine principal

The tragic, accidental death of John Wilson has left the whole town in mourning. He had only been principal of the local school for two years, but he made a big impact on it almost as soon as he arrived. The large crowd at his recent funeral is a **testament to** the high regard in which the town held him.

John Wilson was a man of enormous **erudition.** It was impossible not to be instantly impressed by his intellect. Indeed, we thought ourselves very lucky that someone with his educational qualifications and experience had applied for the post at our school. He took a first class honours degree in English Literature at Oxford University and was awarded a doctorate by the Sorbonne in Paris.

His intellect was impressive, but it was only one of his many **attributes.** He was far from being an academic who **lived in an ivory tower.** He gained the respect and admiration of his colleagues by the hands-on approach which he adopted to the post of principal. His skill as an administrator was **second to none,** but he insisted on doing some teaching as part of his duties, and his teaching was **nothing short of** inspirational. He had the knack of encouraging even the most **reluctant** and **unwilling** students to learn and, often, to become enthusiastic about literature.

John Wilson was one of those **rare birds,** a person of an academic bent who is an excellent, all-round sportsman. At the time of his death, he played tennis and golf on a regular basis—and extremely well. He was a keen, and most effective member, of the staff team in the annual staff versus pupils cricket match. From time to time, he helped to coach the lower school's rugby team.

I could go on at great length about John's academic, administrative and sporting achievements, but no description of John would be complete without mention of his great compassion. Although he could be a strict disciplinarian when the situation **warranted** it, he always treated students in any kind of trouble with great understanding and a willingness to help. He was much respected, and even loved, by most of the students.

John was a loving husband and father. He was ably supported in his work at the school, especially in fund-raising activities, by his wife, Mary, and his two sons, Jim and Dan, and his daughter, Lucy, were all students at the school. They were a devoted family and our thoughts are with Mary and the children at this sad time.

Vocabulary Study

attribute

This is a formal word meaning **feature** or **quality**. It can be replaced by either of these words or a synonym for them:

- *Meg's sense of humour is one of her most attractive* ***attributes.***
- *Meg's sense of humour is one of her most attractive* ***characteristics.***

bird, a rare bird

This is a cliché used to describe an unusual or exceptional person or a type of person rarely encountered:

- *James was one of those* ***rare birds****—a very handsome man who was not at all conceited.*
- *James was one of those* ***very unusual people****—a very handsome man who was not at all conceited.*
- *James was a type of* ***person you rarely meet****—a very handsome man who was not at all conceited.*

erudition

This is a formal word meaning **learning** or **academic knowledge**. It can be replaced by one of these expressions or you can sometimes reword a sentence using an adjective such as **well-read, scholarly** or **learned**:

- *The other teachers admired Peter Brown's* ***erudition****, but they realized that he was not a very good teacher.*
- *The other teachers admired Peter Brown's* ***knowledge****, but they realized that he was not a very good teacher.*
- *Paul is a person of great* ***erudition****.*
- *Paul is* ***extremely well-read****.*

ivory, live in an ivory tower

This is a cliché used to emphasize how far from practical things or ordinary life someone is. The cliché can be replaced by a reference to **practicality** or **real life**:

- *Jack is a poet who* ***lives in an ivory tower****. He has no idea how much money his wife has to earn in order to keep the family, while he waits for his work to be published.*
- *Jack is a poet who is* ***completely impractical****. He has no idea how much money his wife has to earn in order to keep the family, while he waits for his work to be published.*
- *Jack is a poet who is* ***completely divorced from real life****. He has no idea how much money his wife has to earn in order to keep the family, while he waits for his work to be published.*

reluctant and unwilling

The words **reluctant** and **unwilling** both indicate that someone does not want to do something. They mean the same and one of them is redundant. You can delete either of them.

second, second to none

This is a cliché used to emphasize how excellent or outstanding someone or something is. It can be replaced by one of several words from standard language, such as **excellent, outstanding, exceptional, first-rate** or **brilliant**:

- *Ben's talents as a chef are* ***second to none****, but he is very temperamental and difficult to get on with.*
- *Ben's talents as a chef are* ***brilliant****, but he is very temperamental and difficult to get on with.*
- *The college is* ***second to none*** *when it comes to academic instruction, but its sporting facilities are very poor.*
- *The college is* ***first-rate*** *when it comes to academic instruction, but its sporting facilities are very poor.*

short, nothing short of

This is a cliché used for emphasis. A sentence containing it can be reworded using an adverb such as **absolutely, utterly, totally**, or a corresponding adjective, where appropriate:

- *The man's treatment of his wife was* ***nothing short of*** *barbaric.*
- *The man's treatment of his wife was* ***utterly*** *barbaric.*
- *The climber's mother felt that his survival was* ***nothing short of*** *a miracle.*
- *The climber's mother felt that his survival was an* ***absolute*** *miracle.*

testament, a testament to

This is a formal expression meaning to be proof of. It can be replaced by an expression such as **be proof of**, or **demonstrate the proof of**, or

sometimes by a verb such as **demonstrate** or **show**:

- *These houses are **a testament to** the craftsmanship of the builders who erected them last century.*
- *These houses **are proof of** the craftsmanship of the builders who erected them last century.*
- *These houses **demonstrate** the craftsmanship of the builders who erected them last century.*

warrant

This is a formal word meaning to make something necessary or appropriate. It can be replaced by a reference to **necessary** or **appropriate**, or by an expression such as **call for**, **demand** or **require**:

- *Liz dressed far more formally than the occasion **warranted**.*
- *Liz dressed far more formally than the occasion **demanded**.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *The large crowd at his recent funeral is **a testament to** the high regard in which the town held him.*

_____

_____

2. *John Wilson was a man of enormous **erudition**.*

_____

3. *His intellect was impressive, but it was only one of his many **attributes**.*

_____

_____

4. *He had the knack of encouraging even the most **reluctant** and **unwilling** students to learn and, often, to become enthusiastic about literature.*

_____

_____

5. *John Wilson was one of those **rare birds**, a person of an academic bent who is an excellent, all-round sportsman.*

_____

_____

B Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *He is best known as a writer of _____. (**satire / satyr**)*
2. *She is a very spiritual person and cares little for _____ pleasures. (**earthly / earthy**)*

3. *Anne spent so much time _____ herself for the party that we arrived very late.* (***titivating / titillating***)

4. *The plants have been affected by some kind of _____ disease.* (***systematic / systemic***)

5. *The whole town has been appalled at the _____ of the crime against the child.* (***enormity / enormousness***)

C Rewrite the following sentences, omitting any redundant words.

1. *The teenager seemed unconcerned about the crime which he had committed, but his parents were apprehensive about the possible consequences and repercussions of his action.*

_____

_____

_____

2. *We knew that something was wrong because John's mien was very grave and he looked very serious.*

_____

_____

3. *The story was about brave warriors fighting fabulous and mythical animals.*

_____

D Rewrite the following sentences, replacing the colloquial or slang words with standard words or expressions.

1. *Fred said that he had received excellent treatment in hospital but he complained about the terrible* ***grub****.*

_____

_____

2. *Bill may have a very* ***cushy*** *job now, but he worked very hard for very little money when he was a young man.*

_____

_____

Collective nouns

A **collective noun** is a word used as the name of a number or group of persons, animals or things considered as a whole. For example:

*Some of the farmer's **herd** of cows escaped from the field.*
*A **troupe** of acrobats performed at the circus.*

Exercise 2

A Write down the collective noun for each of the following groups.

1. *a number of sailors on a ship* _____
2. *a number of fish* _____
3. *a number of worshippers in church* _____
4. *a number of ships* _____
5. *a number of elephants* _____
6. *a number of bees* _____
7. *a number of lions* _____
8. *a number of wolves* _____
9. *a number of puppies* _____
10. *a number of monkeys* _____

B What or who would you be likely to find in the following groups?

1. *constellation* _____
2. *gaggle* _____
3. *coven* _____
4. *fleet* _____
5. *cortege* _____

Unit 10

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

Happy news

"Hello, everyone! I'm sorry I'm late, but I have some **hot** news," said Amy as she joined some of her friends in the coffee bar.

"Hi, Amy!" said Anne. **"What gives?"**

"Beth has just got engaged!" announced Amy.

"I thought Beth was still working overseas. How did you hear?" asked Jane.

"Her mother told me," replied Amy.

"You talked to Beth's mother, the dreadfully snobbish Mrs Davidson?" asked Pat. "I didn't know you moved in such **exalted** social circles."

"I don't," laughed Amy. "I met her in the supermarket. She doesn't usually speak to me, but she was telling everyone in sight about Beth."

"I bet she's **like a dog with two tails**," said Anne. "Mrs Davidson just loves being the centre of attention. She's probably already planning her mother-of-the-bride outfit."

"Did she say who the man is?" asked Emma.

"Apparently, he's one of the **big shots** in the firm that Beth works for," said Amy. "You know that Beth works as an interpreter for a merchant bank in Berlin."

Pat laughed. "Of course, that's not necessarily so. Mrs Davidson would say that anyone marrying Beth would be **a big cheese**. Is he German?"

"No," replied Amy. "He's a **Yank**. He's from New York, but he's been in Berlin for years. And he's **rolling in it**!"

"Well, he would be, wouldn't he, if he's a senior merchant banker," said Anne. "Anyway, can you see Mrs Davidson letting Beth marry someone who **wasn't loaded**?"

"No, but I bet she's **talking up** how much the groom earns," said Emma. "Mrs Davidson always does."

"We should send Beth a card to congratulate her, in any case. It's not her fault that she has such an objectionable mother," said Amy.

"That's absolutely true," said Pat, "and she's not at all like her mother. Beth was such **a little mouse** when we were at college. I wonder if she's changed?"

"I think Beth was a little mouse because she has such a domineering mother," said Anne. "Beth is scared of her. So was Beth's father, I'm sure, but he died a few years ago."

"I hope Beth's chosen the right man to marry," said Emma.

"Well, at least her mother can't have chosen him for her," replied Amy. "Beth's been working in Berlin for about four years and Mrs Davidson told me she had never visited her there. Apparently, she hardly ever goes abroad. She doesn't like foreigners."

"Now why doesn't that surprise me?" asked Pat.

Vocabulary Study

cheese, a big cheese

This is an informal expression used to refer to someone who is important or powerful, especially in an organization. You can replace it with an expression such as **important person, leading person** or **noteworthy person**, or with a word such as **chief, boss** or **director**, where appropriate:

- *People say that Pam only got the job in the theatre company because her uncle's **a big cheese** on the board of management.*
- *People say that Pam only got the job in the theatre company because her uncle's **one of the leading people** on the board of management.*

Language Help

The term big shot (*see below*) is used in the same way as big cheese.

dog, like a dog with two tails

If you say that someone is **like a dog with two tails**, you mean that they are feeling exceptionally pleased or proud about something:

- *Jim's wife has just had a baby boy and Jim is **like a dog with two tails.***
- *Jim's wife has just had a baby boy and Jim is **absolutely thrilled.***

exalted

This is a formal word, sometimes also used in humorous or ironic contexts, meaning of high rank or position or of great importance. It can be replaced with a simpler expression such as **high-ranking, very important, distinguished** or **eminent:**

- *Jane's first husband was an ambassador and she was used to living overseas a lot and mixing with **exalted** levels of foreign society.*
- *Jane's first husband was an ambassador and she was used to living overseas a lot and mixing with **high-ranking** levels of foreign society.*

give, what gives?

This is an informal expression used when you want to know what the news is. It can be replaced by a phrase such as **what's happening?, what's the news?** or **what's new?**:

- *I hear that there's going to be a staff meeting this afternoon.* ***What gives?***
- *I hear that there's going to be a staff meeting this afternoon.* ***What's happening?***

hot

In the informal context of the passage, **hot** means up-to-date and exciting or interesting. These words, or synonyms for them, can be used to replace it:

- *Lucy has a* ***hot*** *piece of gossip. Paul, apparently, didn't get divorced before he married Jane.*
- *Lucy has a* ***fascinating piece of up-to-the-minute*** *gossip. Paul, apparently, didn't get divorced before he married Jane.*

load, be loaded

This is an informal expression meaning to be very rich:

- *Anne's parents must* ***be loaded****. They've just bought a huge house in the most expensive part of the city.*
- *Anne's parents must* ***be*** *extremely* ***well-off****. They've just bought a huge house in the most expensive part of the city.*

Language Help

The expression **be rolling in it** (see *below*) has the same meaning, and is used in the same way as **be loaded**.

mouse, a little mouse

This is a metaphorical expression. It can be phrased more simply by using a word such as **quiet** or **reserved**:

- *I was surprised that Meg made her views known so loudly at the meeting. Usually, she's such* ***a little mouse****.*
- *I was surprised that Meg made her views known so loudly at the meeting. Usually, she's so* ***reserved****.*

roll, be rolling in it

This expression has the same meaning, and is used in the same way, as **be loaded** above. It can be replaced by the same expressions as those which can replace **be loaded**:

- *Mike and Liz* ***are rolling in it****. They both have very well-paid jobs and have no children.*
- *Mike and Liz* ***are*** *extremely* ***well-to-do****. They both have very well-paid jobs and have no children.*

shot, big shot

This expression has the same meaning, and is used in the same way, as **big cheese** above. It can be replaced by the same expressions as those which can replace **big cheese**:

- *John's father is one of the* ***big shots*** *in the American branch of the company.*
- *John's father is one of the most* ***powerful people*** *in the American branch of the company.*

talk, talk something up

This is an expression, used in informal contexts, which means to make something better or greater than it is. It can be replaced by a word such as **exaggerate** or **overstate**:

- *John probably did get a high mark in the exam, but I'm sure his father is* ***talking it up****.*
- *John probably did get a high mark in the exam, but I'm sure his father is* ***exaggerating it****.*

Yank

This is an informal, and often derogatory, word for a person from the US. It can be replaced by the word **American**:

- *I think the new managing director's a* ***Yank****.*
- *I think the new managing director's an* ***American****.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *"I didn't know you moved in such **exalted** social circles."*

   _____

2. *"Apparently, he's one of the **big shots** in the firm that Beth works for," said Amy.*

   _____

3. *Pat laughed, "Of course, that's not necessarily so. Mrs Davidson would say that anyone marrying Beth would be **a big cheese**."*

   _____

   _____

4. *"Anyway, can you see Mrs Davidson letting Beth marry someone who **wasn't loaded**?"*

   _____

5. *"Beth was such **a little mouse** when we were at college."*

   _____

B Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *The disease was formerly _____ in the area, but it has been wiped out.* ***(endemic / epidemic)***
2. *The food served at the party was very _____ .* ***(tasteful / tasty)***
3. *She died young, but she had _____ ten children by the time of her death.* ***(born / borne)***
4. *I'm only in town every second weekend. On _____ Saturdays I go and visit my parents in the country.* ***(alternate / alternative)***
5. *The tribe carried out some _____ forms of torture on their enemies.* ***(barbarian / barbarous)***

C Tick the idiom that is similar in meaning to the phrase in bold in each sentence.

1. *Last night Paul was telling us about his plans to travel, but they're just **unrealistic dreams**.*

   a. *cakes and ale* ☐
   b. *a dream ticket* ☐
   c. *castles in Spain* ☐
   d. *gold dust* ☐

2. *Acting is a difficult career but the people at the drama college seem to think that Amy* ***has the talent and personality to succeed.***

   a. *have got it made* ☐
   b. *keep the flag flying* ☐
   c. *have what it takes* ☐
   d. *be sold on it* ☐

3. *Anne said that she didn't want any financial assistance from her parents, but now she has run out of money and has had to* ***go to them and humbly ask for money.***

   a. *go cap in hand to someone* ☐
   b. *be going begging* ☐
   c. *be asking for it* ☐
   d. *put something on the table* ☐

4. *It used to be a very powerful organization, but, in recent years, it has* ***become much less powerful and less efficient.***

   a. *go to the country* ☐
   b. *go to the dogs* ☐
   c. *be not all it is cracked up to be* ☐
   d. *hit the sack* ☐

5. *Jim now regrets taking on his present job and is complaining that he has to work long hours, but he* ***was fully aware of the facts of the situation*** *when he took it on.*

   a. *be in the know* ☐
   b. *know the score* ☐
   c. *know the facts of life* ☐
   d. *get the message* ☐

Synonyms

A **synonym** is a word that has the same, or nearly the same, meaning as another word. When you are writing an essay, it makes the essay more interesting if you do not use the same words all the time. A good knowledge of common synonyms helps you vary your vocabulary.

The following are examples of synonyms:

Word	Synonyms
confidential	secret, private
dangerous	risky, unsafe, perilous
frighten	scare, alarm, terrify
huge	large, immense, enormous, vast
neat	tidy
sad	unhappy, miserable
short (report)	brief, concise
small	little, tiny, minute
thing	object, article
wealth	fortune, riches

Exercise 2

Rewrite the following sentences, replacing each word in bold with a synonym.

1. *The other walkers were going at a very **fast** pace and Lucy soon got tired.* _____
2. *It was the deputy manager's task to **handle** customers' complaints.* _____
3. *Anne and Jim had a **row** in the restaurant and she walked out.* _____
4. *The attacker **hit** Bill in the face.* _____
5. *There is a **scarcity** of food in the country.* _____
6. *We encountered some **difficult** problems when setting up the new computer system.* _____
7. *The meat has been left out of the fridge and it is **going bad**.* _____
8. *Their country cottage is situated in a very **peaceful** setting.* _____
9. *The pain was so bad that she could scarcely **tolerate** it.* _____
10. *Jack made an **inappropriate** remark.* _____

Unit 11

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

Unfair play

"I'm so **hacked off**," exclaimed Jim, as he walked into the coffee bar where a group of his friends were sitting.

"Who's **rattled your cage**?" asked Mike. "You look furious."

"I was playing for Eastfield Rovers this afternoon and I was sent off," replied Jim, absolutely upset. "I still can't believe it! I hadn't committed any foul!"

"What happened, Jim?" asked Bob.

"We were playing Levenside and I was playing well, even if I do say it myself," replied Jim. "They're a **snooty** lot and we were determined to beat them. We were two goals ahead, both scored by me. Barry had just passed the ball to me and I wasn't far from the other side's goal, surrounded by their players. Suddenly, one of their players ran up and seemed to trip up just in front of me. He fell to the ground, groaning and holding his ankle."

"What happened then?" broke in Ken.

"I thought he was **kidding**," said Jim, "although it was a strange time to be fooling around. But he didn't get up. He just lay there clutching his ankle—and nobody had touched him. He was obviously **putting it on**."

"Where was the ref?" asked Bob. "Surely he realized what was happening, or was he **turning a blind eye**?"

"He was up at the other end of the field," said Jim, "and when he reached us, all the players from the other side told him that I'd deliberately tripped up the player on the ground. Jack was his name. The ref **took** what they said **for gospel** and sent me off. It was a nightmare!"

"That's terrible!" said Ken. "But didn't any of your team defend you?"

"They protested **like mad**," said Jim, "but it didn't make any difference. There were far more of their players around me when he fell. And anyway, most of our lot were completely stunned—like me. But, after I went off, the rest of the team were so furious that they played brilliantly and really **hammered** the other side. We won 4-0."

"I bet they were furious," said Bob.

"They were **foaming at the mouth**!" said Jim. "Anyway, thanks for listening. **I'm out of here!** I need to talk this over with our coach. Surely something can be done about it. I hate the thought of them getting away with cheating and they've damaged my reputation."

Vocabulary Study

blind, turn a blind eye

If you say that someone is **turning a blind eye to** something, you mean that they are deliberately paying no attention to it. The expression is an idiom which has become a cliché. The cliché can be replaced by an expression such as **ignore, pay no attention to, take no notice of**, etc:

- *The policeman was accused of **turning a blind eye to** the youth's criminal behaviour because he knew that the youth's father was a policeman.*
- *The policeman was accused of **deliberately paying no attention to** the youth's criminal behaviour because he knew that the youth's father was a policeman.*

cage, rattle someone's cage

This is an idiom which has become a cliché and means to annoy or upset someone. It is usually used in informal contexts and can be replaced by a word such as **annoy, irritate, anger** or **upset**:

- *Jim's been in a very bad mood all morning. Who **rattled his cage**?*
- *Jim's been in a very bad mood all morning. Who **upset him**?*

gospel, take something for gospel

This is a cliché meaning to accept something as being completely true. The cliché can be replaced either by an expression such as **accept something as true** or **regard something as true**, or by using the verb **believe**:

- *When Mike told us that he had won the lottery, we **took it for gospel**, but he was only joking.*
- *When Mike told us that he had won the lottery, we **believed him completely**, but he was only joking.*

Language Help

The gospel refers to the books of the Bible which deal with the teachings of Christ.

hack, hacked off

This is an informal expression meaning extremely annoyed. It can easily be replaced by a word such as **angry, annoyed** or **disappointed**:

- *Jack was really **hacked off** at not being chosen for the school football team.*
- *Jack was really **disappointed** at not being chosen for the school football team.*

hammer

In the informal context of the passage, **hammer** means to defeat someone very badly. You can replace it by using **defeat, beat**, but **trounce** is the closest in meaning:

- *We were the weaker team, but we **hammered** the opposition.*
- *We were the weaker team, but we **defeated** the opposition **soundly**.*
- *We were the weaker team, but we **trounced** the opposition.*

kid

The word **kid** in the informal context of the passage means to say something that is not meant to be taken seriously. It can be replaced by a word such as **joke** or **tease**:

- *I was nervous when Jane told me that the boss wanted to see me in his office, but she was only **kidding**.*
- *I was nervous when Jane told me that the boss wanted to see me in his office, but she was only **teasing**.*
- *I was nervous when Jane told me that the boss wanted to see me in his office, but she **wasn't being serious**.*

mad, like mad

This is an informal expression used to emphasize the action of a verb. According to the context, it can be replaced by such expressions as **very fast, very hard, very much, a great deal**, etc:

- *You'll have to run **like mad** if you're going to catch the last bus.*
- *You'll have to run **very fast** if you're going to catch the last bus.*
- *I'll have to study **like mad** if I'm going to get enough work done to pass the exam.*
- *I'll have to study **very hard** if I'm going to get enough work done to pass the exam.*

mouth, foam at the mouth

If you say that someone is **foaming at the mouth**, you mean that someone is extremely angry. It is an idiom which has become a cliché and is used in informal contexts. The cliché can be replaced by the use of a word such as **angry, furious, enraged**, etc:

- *Ben was **foaming at the mouth** when he heard that his assistant had got the job which he had applied for.*
- *Ben was **absolutely furious** when he heard that his assistant had got the job which he had applied for.*

Language Help

Foaming at the mouth can be a sign of madness and people who are very angry are sometimes said, in informal contexts, to be mad.

on, put it on

This is an informal expression meaning to pretend that something is the case, although it is not. It can be replaced by an expression such as **pretend** or **act**:

- *The girl said that she had hurt her arm, but she was **putting it on** because she didn't want to go to school.*
- *The girl said that she had hurt her arm, but she was only **pretending** because she didn't want to go to school.*

out, I'm out of here!

This is an informal expression, used mainly in spoken English, to indicate that you are leaving somewhere immediately. It can be replaced by an expression such as **I'm going!, I'm leaving!, I need to go!** or **it's time I left!**:

- *Is that the right time? **I'm out of here!***
- *Is that the right time? **It's time I left!***

snooty

This is an informal word used to indicate that someone acts as though they were better than, or more important than, other people. It can be replaced by a word such as **arrogant, snobbish, haughty** or **condescending**:

- *Mike's new girlfriend is beautiful, but she is very **snooty** to his friends, who are all quite poor. Apparently, she comes from a very wealthy background.*
- *Mike's new girlfriend is beautiful, but she is very **condescending** to his friends, who are all quite poor. Apparently, she comes from a very wealthy background.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *"Who's **rattled your cage?**" asked Mike. "You look furious."*

   _____

2. *"They're a **snooty** lot and we were determined to beat them."*

   _____

3. *"Where was the ref?" asked Bob. "Surely he realized what was happening, or was he **turning a blind eye**?"*

   _____

   _____

4. *"The ref **took** what they said **for gospel** and sent me off."*

   _____

5. *"They protested **like mad**," said Jim, "but it didn't make any difference."*

   _____

6. *"They were **foaming at the mouth**!" said Jim.*

   _____

B Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *Pat's father died of a rare blood disease and she is worried that it may be _____. (**hereditary / heredity**)*
2. *James is _____ secretary of the society. (**honorary / honourable**)*
3. *I know Lucy's your sister, but her behaviour is not really _____. (**defensible / defensive**)*
4. *It is not _____ to remove these books from the library. You must read them here. (**permissible / permissive**)*
5. *He was British _____ in Paris for several years. (**council / consul**)*

C Fill in the word missing from the idiom in each sentence.

1. *I didn't get all the details of what the speaker said, but I **caught the** _____.*
2. *Jill played brilliantly in the first match of the tennis tournament. She didn't **put a** _____ **wrong**.*
3. *I've just seen a job advertised in the local paper that **is right up your** _____.*

D Replace the expressions in bold in the following sentences with simpler words or expressions.

1. *Jane thought that, if she flattered Tom, he would give her the job, but her flattery* ***cut no ice with*** *him.*

_____

_____

2. *There's no point in discussing this plan any more. It's* ***been dead in the water*** *since we discovered it was too expensive.*

_____

_____

Back formation

Back formation is a process by which new words are formed by removing an element from an existing word, rather than, as is usually the case, by adding an element to an existing word. The date of its first use is later than that of the word from which it is derived; hence, the term "back formation". In the process, there is usually a change of word class, usually a verb formed from a noun. Older examples of back formation include **edit** from *editor*, **laze** from *lazy*, **scavenge** from *scavenger*. A more modern example is **automate** from *automaton*.

Exercise 2

Write down the verb which is a back formation from each of the following.

1. *enthusiasm* _____
2. *donation* _____
3. *caretaker* _____
4. *television* _____
5. *housekeeper* _____
6. *reminiscence* _____
7. *intuition* _____
8. *burglar* _____
9. *eavesdropper* _____
10. *shoplifting* _____

Unit 12

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

Immigrants not welcome

The word "immigrant" appears to have become a **dirty word**. There may be a record number of people worldwide trying to leave their own countries, but the governments of most other countries do not really want to admit them. Furthermore, they often regard immigrants as a tiresome problem that they have failed to solve and are weary of discussing. They have tried ignoring it, but this does not work.

Some would-be immigrants are, in fact, asylum seekers, people who are forced to leave their own countries because they fear that their lives are in danger, often because of their political views. They are seeking protection, known as political asylum, in another country. Historically, there has been a lot of sympathy for people in this category and they have willingly been given a **safe haven**. Alas, such sympathy seems to be **on the wane**.

This may simply be a result of the fact that there has been a sharp increase in the numbers of asylum seekers in recent years, mirroring the increase in the number of **hot spots** or **war-torn** areas in the world. The sheer extent of the problem has left foreign governments feeling helpless and unable to offer wholesale political asylum on the required scale.

There has been a good deal of scepticism directed at people seeking political asylum. It is often alleged that many of them are simply seeking a better way of life, rather than protection from extreme danger, that they are, in other words, economic immigrants. People who make such allegations often do so in an extremely **judgemental** and **condemnatory** way.

Yet, it is **one of life's little ironies** that many of the people who adopt this critical attitude to immigrants were themselves, at one point, economic immigrants, although no one **dubbed** them thus at the time. They just had the good fortune to be immigrants when these were not regarded as a problem. In fact, they were often regarded as a great **boon** because they provided much-needed workers and so improved the economy of their chosen country. Indeed, countries such as America and Australia can be regarded as nations built on the basis of economic immigration.

Now, they have forgotten that either they, or their ancestors, were once immigrants and they are trying to prevent others from having the opportunities that they benefited from. It is more than time that they started to show a little of **the milk of human kindness**.

Vocabulary Study

boon

This is a word used in rather formal or literary contexts to mean something that is very helpful in some way. It can be replaced by a simpler word such as **help, advantage, benefit, good thing** or **blessing**:

- *Living so close to my parents was a great **boon** when my children were young because they helped with childcare.*
- *Living so close to my parents was a great **advantage** when my children were young because they helped with childcare.*

condemnatory and judgemental

Both of these words indicate having a bad opinion of, or to disapprove of, someone or something. One of them is, thus, redundant and you can omit either of these.

dirty, a dirty word

If you say that something is **a dirty word**, you mean that it is something that people do not like or approve of, or that they don't want to talk about or think about:

- *To Frank, work is **a dirty word**. He's very lazy and he's been unemployed for most of his life.*
- *To Frank, work is **something he dislikes very much**. He's very lazy and he's been unemployed for most of his life.*

dub

The word **dub** is a formal word used to indicate what someone or something is called. It can be replaced by a simpler word such as **call, name, term** or **label**:

- *The newspapers **dubbed** the house where the murders took place as the House of Horror.*
- *The newspapers **called** the house where the murders took place the House of Horror.*
- *Tom had long been **dubbed** a confirmed bachelor when he suddenly got married at the age of 60.*
- *Tom had long been **labelled***

haven, a safe haven

This is a cliché which is used to refer to a place of safety. It is also an example of linguistic redundancy because the word **haven** means a safe place without the addition of the adjective **safe**. The cliché can be replaced with an expression using the word **safe** or the word **safety**, or by a word such as **refuge** or **sanctuary**:

- *The children's father treated them very badly and they came to regard their grandmother's house as **a safe haven**.*
- *The children's father treated them very badly and they came to regard their grandmother's house as **a safe place**.*
- *The vicarage was regarded locally as **a safe haven** for people in trouble.*
- *The vicarage was regarded locally as **a refuge** for people in trouble.*

Language Help

Haven is an old word for a harbour.

hot, hot spot

This is a cliché used in informal contexts to refer to a place where fighting or trouble is likely to take place. It can be avoided by using a lengthier description indicating this meaning:

- *The area is one of the world's well-known **hot spots** and so it is hardly surprising that, once again, political unrest has broken out there.*
- *There is **a great deal of conflict in that area** and so it is hardly surprising that, once again, political unrest has broken out there.*
- *There has been **a great deal of trouble in that area** and so it is hardly surprising that, once again, political unrest has broken out there.*

irony, one of life's little ironies

This is a cliché which is used to describe a situation which is opposite to, or different from, what you would expect. The cliché can be avoided by using the word **ironic**:

- *It is **one of life's little ironies** that Meg, who is a dedicated vegetarian, has fallen in love with the son of a butcher.*

- *It is **ironic** that Meg, who is a dedicated vegetarian, has fallen in love with the son of a butcher.*

milk, the milk of human kindness

This is a cliché which means the natural kindness and sympathy felt by people for other people. It can be replaced by a word such as **sympathy**, **compassion**, **concern**, etc:

- *Some people expected Bob to show some sympathy towards the people he sacked, but we, who know him well, knew that he was completely without any of **the milk of human kindness**.*
- *Some people expected Bob to show some sympathy towards the people he sacked, but we, who know him well, knew that he was completely without any **natural concern for others**.*

Language Help

This is a quotation from Shakespeare's *Macbeth (Act I Scene V)*: *"Yet do I fear thy nature. It is too full o' the milk of human kindness."*

wane, on the wane

If you say that something is **on the wane**, you mean that it is becoming smaller, less common, less important, less strong, etc. It is usually found in rather formal or literary contexts and can easily be replaced by a simpler expression:

- *Support for the government's economic policy is **on the wane**.*
- *Support for the government's economic policy is **becoming less strong**.*
- *Such village traditions are **on the wane**.*
- *Such village traditions are **less common**.*

Language Help

The moon is said to **wane** when it gradually appears less and less round after the full moon.

war-torn

This is a cliché which is used to describe a place which is being very badly affected by a war that is being fought there. It is a neat cliché and replacing it involves the use of a lengthier description:

- *International agencies have been asked to send urgent aid to the **war-torn** area.*
- *International agencies have been asked to send urgent aid to the area **which is suffering badly from the effects of war**.*
- *International agencies have been asked to send urgent aid to the area **which is experiencing the dreadful effects of war**.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *The word "immigrant" appears to have become **a dirty word**.*

_____

2. *Historically, there has been a lot of sympathy for people in this category and they have willingly been given **a safe haven**.*

_____

_____

3. *Alas, such sympathy seems to be **on the wane**.*

_____

4. *People who make such allegations often do so in an extremely* ***judgemental*** *and* ***condemnatory*** *way.*

_____

_____

5. *Yet, it is* ***one of life's little ironies*** *that many of the people who adopt this critical attitude to immigrants were themselves, at one point, economic immigrants, although no one* ***dubbed*** *them thus at the time.*

_____

_____

_____

6. *It is more than time that they started to show a little of* ***the milk of human kindness.***

_____

B Rewrite the following sentences, replacing each word or expression in bold with a simpler word or expression.

1. *It is important that members of the jury are in no way* ***partisan.***

_____

2. *Ben keeps* ***eulogizing about*** *the country house his parents have bought.*

_____

3. *Many of these herbs are considered to have* ***therapeutic*** *powers.*

_____

4. *His presence on her land was not* ***licit,*** *and she had to get the police to remove him.*

_____

_____

5. *Jim has taken some medicine to try to cure his* ***dyspepsia.***

_____

C Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *The event was attended by several TV* _____ *.* ***(personages / personalities)***
2. *It was a* _____ *display by the young gymnasts.* ***(masterful / masterly)***
3. *The child has a* _____ *heart condition, but it is not hereditary.* ***(congenital / genetic)***
4. *These are the sales figures for December and these are the* _____ *figures for the year.* ***(accumulative / cumulative)***
5. *Paul belongs to a very strict religious sect and leads a very* _____ *way of life.* ***(ascetic / aesthetic)***

Comparative forms of adjectives

The comparative form of an adjective is formed by adding **-er** to it or by putting "more" in front of it.

In the case of one-syllable adjectives, the ending **-er** is usually added to the adjective, as *quick/***quicker**, *short/***shorter**, *low/***lower**. If the one-syllable adjective ends in **e**, remove this before adding the **-er**, as *tame/***tamer**.

If the one-syllable adjective ends in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel, you should double the consonant before adding **-er**, as *flat/***flatter**.

If the one-syllable adjective ends in **-y**, you do **not** change the **-y** *to* **-i** before adding **-er**, as *shy/***shyer**. However, note that *dry* usually has the comparative form **drier**.

In the case of two-syllable adjectives ending in **-y**, you change the **-y** to **-i** before adding **-er**, as *pretty/***prettier**.

Some two-syllable adjectives add **-er**, such as *clever/***cleverer**, to form the comparative, but the comparative of some of them is formed by preceding them with the word "more", as *hopeful/***more hopeful**. In some cases, either of these ways of forming the positive is possible, depending on your choice or on how the word sounds in context, as *simple/***simpler** or **more simple** and *gentle/***gentler** or **more gentle**.

Adjectives with three or more syllables usually form their comparative forms with "more", as *dangerous/***more dangerous**. However, some adjectives which are formed by adding **un-** to the beginning of other adjectives, such as *unlucky* and *unhappy*, can either form their comparative forms by adding **-er** or by using **more**, as **unluckier** or **more unlucky**, **unhappier** or **more unhappy**.

A few common adjectives have irregular comparative forms, such as *good/***better** and *bad/***worse**.

Exercise 2

Rewrite the following sentences, substituting the comparative form for each of the adjectives in bold.

1. *We had a **wonderful** time at the dance.*

_____

2. *My suggestion got **little** support from the company.*

_____

3. *It was a **sunny** day.*

_____

4. *Tom suggested a **ridiculous** idea for saving money.*

_____

5. *It was an **unlucky** decision.*

_____

6. *The area has a **dry** climate.*

_____

7. *Old Aunt Mary seems **spry**.*

_____

8. *The queen gave a **gracious** wave.*

_____

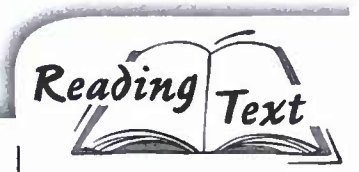
9. *She wore a **floppy** hat.*

_____

10. *It was a **hopeless** case.*

_____

Unit 13



Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

Too much exercise

Jenny and some of her friends were gathering at Jenny's house before going to the cinema. Everyone was there, except for Lucy, who was supposed to be joining them.

"It's time we **got cracking**, girls," said Jenny. "I've heard this film's very popular and we want to get reasonably good seats. Where's Lucy? She should be here by now."

"Do you really have to ask?" asked Mary. "She's at the gym, of course. Where else?"

"I'm a bit worried about her," said Anna. "She's become a real fitness **junkie**. She goes to the gym every night after work and sometimes during her lunch hour. Apparently, she jogs in the morning before work, too."

"She doesn't look as though all the exercise is doing her any good, either," said Jenny. "She looked **dead on her feet** when I saw her yesterday, and she seemed **down in the mouth.** I thought exercise was supposed to **buck you up**."

"It usually does," said Mary, "but it should be a case of moderation in all things. Lucy's being far from moderate."

"Lucy's motto's probably 'no pain, no gain'," said Anna. "She certainly seems to have arranged a punishing schedule for herself. The funny thing is that she used to be such a **couch potato**. She hated physical exercise."

"That was before Mike **dumped** her," said Amy. "She got it into her head that he got tired of her because she was fat and that's why she's become such an exercise **freak.** In fact, Mike just **fell head over heels for** Alice the first time he saw her and that was that. They're now engaged."

"Lucy was never fat," said Jenny. "She was just right, but now she's **skeletal.**"

"I'm not surprised," said Mary. "Lucy's on a very strict diet. She counts every single calorie and hardly eats enough to keep a bird alive."

"The combination of excessive exercise and hardly any food must be having a terrible effect on her health," said Anna. "It's not surprising that she looks so awful. Do you think there's anything we can do to help?"

"I'm sure we'd all like to help, but it's difficult to know what do," said Jenny. "Lucy's obviously suffering from very low self-esteem. She probably needs professional help."

"We could try," said Mary. "It would be better than just standing by and doing nothing. Let's all think about it and see if we can come up with some ideas."

"OK," said Jenny. "Let's all meet here again tomorrow at the same time."

Vocabulary Study

buck you up

This is an informal expression meaning to make someone more cheerful. It can be replaced by an expression such as **cheer up, make more cheerful** or **raise someone's spirits**:

- *The doctor said that those pills would **buck** Jill **up**, but she seems to be more depressed than ever.*
- *The doctor said that those pills would make Jill **more cheerful** but she seems to be more depressed than ever.*

couch, a couch potato

This is a cliché used in informal contexts to refer to someone who is very inactive. It can be replaced by a simpler word referring to inactivity, such as **lazy, slothful, idle**, etc:

- *Tom used to play football two or three times a week, but he's given up football and become **a couch potato**.*
- *Tom used to play football two or three times a week, but he's given up football and become **very slothful**.*

crack, get cracking

This is an informal expression meaning to move or do something in a fast or faster way:

- *I must **get cracking** or I'm going to miss the train.*
- *I must **hurry up** or I'm going to miss the train.*
- *You're going to have to **get cracking** if this work is to be finished on time.*
- *You're going to have to **speed up** if this work is to be finished on time.*

dump

In the context of the passage, **dump** is an informal word which means to end a relationship with someone. It can be replaced by a word such as **leave** or an expression such as **stop going out with**:

- *Amy was Bill's girlfriend for nearly a year, but she **dumped** him when she met Joe.*
- *Amy was Bill's girlfriend for nearly a year, but she **stopped going out with** him when she met Joe.*

feet, dead on your feet

If you are **dead on your feet**, you are extremely tired. It is an informal expression which can be replaced by a word such as **exhausted**:

- *Mary works as a waitress at a local café and she's **dead on her feet** by the time it closes at 6 o'clock.*
- *Mary works as a waitress at a local café and she's **completely tired out** by the time it closes at 6 o'clock.*

freak

In the context of the passage, **freak** means someone who has a very strong, often abnormal, interest in something. It is used in informal contexts and is often preceded by the thing in which they are interested. It can be replaced by a reference to addiction or obsession:

- *Pam is a health **freak**. She spends a great deal of money on vitamin pills.*
- *Pam is **obsessed by** health. She spends a great deal of money on vitamin pills.*

See **junkie** *below.*

head, fall head over heels for

If you **fall head over heels for** someone, it means that you begin to feel a very strong romantic love for them. The expression is an idiom which has become a cliché and is also found in the longer form **fall head over heels in love with** someone. The cliché can be avoided by replacing it with **fall in love with** or **fall for**:

- *While she was at university, Amy **fell head over heels for** an American student and gave up her course to go and live in the States.*
- *While she was at university, Amy **fell in love** with an American student and gave up her course to go and live in the States.*

junkie

This is an informal word meaning someone who is addicted to something or someone who has an abnormally strong interest in something. If the word is used alone, it usually refers to someone who is addicted to drugs. Otherwise, it is often preceded by the thing to which they are addicted or in which they are interested:

- *Jim is an exercise **junkie**. He goes jogging before he starts work and after he finishes.*
- *Jim is **addicted to** exercise. He goes jogging before he starts work and after he finishes.*

See **freak** *above.*

mouth, down in the mouth

If you say that someone is **down in the mouth**, you mean that they are sad or depressed. It is a cliché, usually used in informal contexts:

- *Bob's been a bit **down in the mouth** since he failed his driving test.*
- *Bob's been a bit **unhappy** since he failed his driving test.*

Language Help

When people are feeling sad, the corners of their mouth tend to turn down and so they look **down in the mouth**.

skeletal

In the context of the passage, **skeletal** is a word used to mean very thin. It can be replaced by a simpler expression which refers to an undesirable thinness, such as **thin as a rake, gaunt, scrawny, skinny**, etc, depending on the context:

- *Jane has begun to recover from her illness, but she is still **skeletal**.*
- *Jane has begun to recover from her illness, but she is still **as thin as a rake**.*
- *The model agency only signs on girls who are **skeletal**.*
- *The model agency only signs on girls who are **scrawny**.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *"It's time we **got cracking**, girls," said Jenny.*

_____

2. *"She looked **dead on her feet** when I saw her yesterday."*

_____

3. *"The funny thing is that she used to be such a **couch potato**. She hated physical exercise."*

_____

4. *"That was before Mike **dumped** her," said Amy.*

_____

5. *"Lucy was never fat," said Jenny. "She was just right, but now she's* ***skeletal.***"

_____

_____

B Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *We have to call a* _____ *because the children have broken a window with their football. (* ***glacier / glazier*** *)*
2. *That* _____ *music was rather depressing. I hope that the orchestra is going to play something more cheerful after the interval. (* ***funeral / funereal*** *)*
3. *I have a dull ache in the* _____ *region. (* ***lumbar / lumber*** *)*
4. *The princess gave a* _____ *wave to the crowd as she emerged from her car. (* ***regal / regale*** *)*
5. *Alcohol* _____ *the functioning of the brain. (* ***effects / affects*** *)*

C Replace the clichés in bold in the following sentences with simpler words or expressions.

1. *My brother and Jack have had a bitter quarrel and I feel that I must side with my brother.* ***Blood is thicker than water.***

_____

_____

2. *Jim's* ***name is mud*** *in the town now. He has evicted three of the elderly tenants of his flats without good reason and without notice.*

_____

_____

3. *We'll have to* ***be up with the lark*** *if we want to get the first flight to Paris in the morning.*

_____

_____

4. *Bringing up three children on her own has* ***not been a bed of roses,*** *but Jill has always looked so cheerful.*

_____

_____

5. *There's something that I need to* ***get off my chest*** *before my father dies.*

_____

_____

More about Language

"I" and "me"

I and **me** are personal pronouns which are liable to be confused. **I** should be used as the subject of a sentence, for example:

You and I have both been asked to play tennis.
May Jane and I play?

Me should be used as the object:

*My brother and father played against my mother and **me**.*
*The project was presented by Jane and **me**.*

People often assume, quite wrongly, that **me** is less polite than **I**. This is probably because they have been taught that, in answer to such questions as *Who is there?*, the grammatically correct reply is *It is I*. However, except in very formal contexts, *It is me* is frequently found in modern usage, especially in spoken contexts.

Confusion often arises as to whether to use **I** or **me** after the word "between". Since "between" is followed by an object, **me** is the correct form. For example:

*Just between you and **me**, I think he is dishonest.*

Exercise 2

Choose the correct pronoun to complete each sentence.

1. *John and (**I** / **me**) both knew Jack at university.*
2. *Jane committed the crime and then tried to put the blame on Pat and (**I** / **me**).*
3. *Just between you and (**I** / **me**), I don't really trust Bob.*
4. *Hi, Jenny. It's (**I** / **me**)! I'm just phoning to say I'll see you at the restaurant tonight.*
5. *It was (**I** / **me**) who found the body, but it was Frank who phoned the police.*
6. *Meg spoke to Peter and (**I** / **me**) before she left.*
7. *The prize money was divided among my brothers and (**I** / **me**).*
8. *My father, mother and (**I** / **me**) are going to my brother's house for Christmas.*
9. *The teacher was angry with two of the other students and (**I** / **me**).*
10. *A gulf developed between my brother and (**I** / **me**) over my father's will.*

Unit 14

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

A new view of counselling

Until a few decades ago, people were expected to accept, and cope with, whatever misfortunes **befell** them. "Pull yourself together", they were told if they were showing signs of being overwhelmed by grief or distress.

If you were lucky, you might have a sympathetic close relative or friend, preferably one who had once been **in the same boat**, with whom you could **have a heart-to-heart**. If not, you just had to **grin and bear it** and keep your troubles to yourself.

Then counselling came into being. Suddenly, people were not required to deal with their own problems in silence. They were offered the services of someone with whom they could talk through their problems, a professional counsellor.

Counselling came into being because it began to be felt that **remaining tight-lipped** about traumatic experiences was the worst possible course of action. The new thinking was that, if anyone experienced any kind of trauma, either in their private life or in the course of their employment, they just had to talk about it in order to remain psychologically sound. Otherwise, you might experience nightmares and flashbacks, become **insomniac** or psychologically disturbed, or fall victim to clinical depression.

Counsellors began to be called in to deal with the emotional **fallout** of many traumatic events. For example, police involved in the uncovering of a particularly **repugnant** murder; soldiers returning from witnessing the **atrocities** of war, and, perhaps, from being engaged in post-war **mopping-up** operations; school children who have experienced the death of a schoolmate in distressing circumstances; people, in short, who might, potentially, suffer from what is known as post-traumatic stress disorder.

There have always been people who were cynical about the value of counselling or felt that it was overused. Now, it has emerged that some experts are beginning to agree, at least in part, with this view of counselling. They feel that people, in general, are more resilient in the face of disaster than has recently been assumed, and that the provision of counselling should not be on offer wholesale. Instead, it should be restricted to those who have become really ill as a result of their experience.

It has also been suggested that talking about traumatic experiences to strangers may be worse than not talking at all, and that doing so might impede the recovery process. So, **the wheel may be coming full circle**. Are we getting back to the days of the informal heart-to-heart and pulling ourselves together?

atrocity

This is a formal word used to mean a terrible, cruel or violent act or an outrage:

- *Police had, so far, failed to discover who was responsible for the recent **atrocity**, although they suspected that the guilty person had committed other **atrocities** in the area.*
- *Police had, so far, failed to discover who was responsible for the recent **brutal act**, although they suspected that the guilty person had committed other **murders** in the area.*

befall

This is a formal word meaning to happen to. It can be replaced by the simpler expression **happen to** or **become of**:

- *Some terrible disaster must have **befallen** the boat because it was never found and all the people in it were presumed dead.*
- *Some terrible disaster must have **happened to** the boat because it was never found and all the people in it were presumed dead.*

boat, in the same boat

This is an idiom which has become a cliché. It means to be in similar circumstances, usually of a difficult or unfortunate nature, and is used in informal contexts:

- *I know how Jim feels about being unemployed. I was **in the same boat** last year until I found my present job.*
- *I know how Jim feels about being unemployed. I was **in the same situation** last year until I found my present job.*
- *I know how Jim feels about being unemployed. I had **a similar problem** last year until I found my present job.*

fallout

This is a cliché used to refer to the bad results of something:

- *The government is unlikely to survive the **fallout** of its disastrous educational policy.*
- *The government is unlikely to survive the **adverse effects** of its disastrous educational policy.*

grin, grin and bear it

If you have to **grin and bear it**, it means that you have no alternative but to accept something. The expression is a cliché which can be replaced with an expression such as **accept**, **put up with**, **endure**, etc:

- *Liz is not all happy in her marriage to Ben, but they have three children and she feels that she has to **grin and bear it**.*
- *Liz is not all happy in her marriage to Ben, but they have three children and she feels that she has to **put up with it**.*

heart, have a heart-to-heart

If you **have a heart-to-heart** with someone, you have a conversation in which you talk frankly about private, intimate things. The expression is a cliché which can be replaced by rewording the sentence and making a reference to a **frank**, **private conversation**:

- *Jim and Alice decided it was time that they **had a heart-to-heart** about their relationship problems.*
- *Jim and Alice decided it was time that they **talked frankly** about their relationship problems.*

insomniac

This is a formal or technical word which means **unable to sleep properly**:

- *After her involvement in the terrible road accident Jane was **insomniac** for several months.*
- *After her involvement in the terrible road accident Jane was **unable to sleep properly** for several months.*
- *After her involvement in the terrible road accident Jane had **sleeping problems** for several months.*

mopping-up

This is an informal expression used to indicate that something is being put back into order. It is often used in wartime situations or in post-disaster situations. The term can be replaced by an expression such as **clearing-up** or **tidying-up**:

- *The volcano ceased to be active a few days ago, but the **mopping-up** process is still going on.*
- *The volcano ceased to be active a few days ago, but the **clearing-up** process is still going on.*

repugnant

If you find something **repugnant**, you mean that it disgusts you or that you feel a strong dislike towards it. The word is used in formal contexts and can be replaced by a similar simpler expression:

- *Most of us find the idea of eating human flesh absolutely **repugnant**.*
- *Most of us find the idea of eating human flesh absolutely **disgusting**.*

tight-lipped, remain tight-lipped

If you **remain tight-lipped** about something, you do not say anything about it:

- *The press have tried to interview relatives of the disgraced MP, but they are all **remaining tight-lipped** about his activities.*
- *The press have tried to interview relatives of the disgraced MP, but they are all **remaining silent** about his activities.*
- *The press have tried to interview relatives of the disgraced MP, but they have all **refused to say anything** about his activities.*

wheel, the wheel has come full circle

This expression is an idiom meaning that a situation is the same as it used to be, despite the changes that have taken place in the meantime:

- *The local farm shop closed when the supermarket opened on the edge of the town, but **the wheel has come full circle**, and the farm shop has reopened to supply the organic produce that the supermarket does not stock.*
- *The local farm shop closed when the supermarket opened on the edge of the town, but **things have gone back to how they were**, and the farm shop has reopened to supply the organic produce that the supermarket does not stock.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *Until a few decades ago, people were expected to accept, and cope with, whatever misfortunes **befell** them.*

_____

_____

2. *You just had to **grin and bear it** and keep your troubles to yourself.*

_____

3. *Counselling came into being because it began to be felt that **remaining tight-lipped** about traumatic experiences was the worst possible course of action.*

_____

_____

_____

4. *Police involved in the uncovering of a particularly **repugnant** murder suffer from what is known as post-traumatic stress disorder.*

_____

_____

5. *So,* ***the wheel may be coming full circle.*** *Are we getting back to the days of the informal heart-to-heart and pulling ourselves together?*

_____

_____

B Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *The builder has agreed to* _____ *the extra charges because the work was not completed on time. (* ***waive / wave*** *)*
2. *We are not* _____ *to your suggestion, but it will have to go before the rest of the committee. (* ***adverse / averse*** *)*
3. *I know you didn't win the match, but you gave a* _____ *performance. Well done! (* ***creditable / credible*** *)*
4. *Many people complain about the government being over-centralized and are in favour of* _____ *for the regions. (* ***devolution / evolution*** *)*
5. *Pam is a sprinter, but she also throws the* _____ *. (* ***discus / discuss*** *)*

C Rewrite the following sentences, replacing the colloquial or slang words or expressions with standard words or expressions.

1. *Frank was very poor as a young man, but he's been* ***coining it in*** *since he started his textile business twenty years ago.*

_____

_____

2. *Aunt Jill* ***ticked us off*** *when we ate some of the biscuits which she had just made.*

_____

_____

3. *I'm going to order some drinks. What's your* ***tipple?***

_____

4. ***Hop it!*** *I'm trying to study and you're disturbing me!*

_____

5. *The singer looked like a very beautiful woman and we were amazed to discover that it was a* ***drag queen.***

_____

_____

Diminutive forms

There are various suffixes in English that indicate a small or smaller version of something. These include the suffix **-ling** and diminutive forms ending in **-ling** often refer to the young of birds or animals, as **duckling**. However, the suffix **-ling** sometimes conveys a derogatory meaning, as **lordling**.

Other examples are **-kin**, as **lambkin**, and **-ock**, as **hillock**.

Historically, the suffixes **-le** and **-en** were used to form diminutive forms, as **chicken** and **kitten**, but these suffixes are no longer active with this sense.

The suffix **-let**, as **piglet**, a small pig, and the suffix **-ette**, as **cigarette** are the two suffixes which are most likely to be used to form modern diminutives.

The suffix **-ette**, in another sense, can also indicate a feminine form, as **usherette**, although the issue of sexism in English makes such formations now uncommon except where these are deliberately derogatory or humorous, as **hackette**, a female journalist.

Exercise 2

Insert the relevant diminutive form of the word in bold in each of the following sentences.

1. *There were three ducks and two _____ in the farmyard. (**geese**)*
2. *The drum _____ was dressed in a red and gold uniform. (**major**)*
3. *Rose's spaniel won first prize in the dog show and she was presented with a _____ of a dog. (**statue**)*
4. *Property in central London is incredibly expensive and all Anne could afford was a _____ in the attic of an old Victorian house. (**flat**)*
5. *It was very hot and the driver wiped away _____ of perspiration from his forehead. (**drops**)*

6. *There is a _____ containing a short history of the school in the library.* (**book**)
7. *We have experienced a severe drought and the river running down the hill is now just a _____.* (**stream**)
8. *Only a few minor _____ attended the reception.* (**stars**)
9. *The gate was left open and the _____ escaped from the field.* (**bull**)
10. *The proud _____ treated the ordinary people of the land with contempt.* (**prince**)

Unit 15

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

Rescue

My wife was in a cooking mood and had decided to treat us all to a traditional Sunday lunch, roast beef and **all the trimmings**. This was washed down with a couple of bottles of good red wine and some excellent cheese, and at the end of the meal we were all **replete**.

After the meal, I felt the need to **stretch my legs** and asked if anyone felt like joining me. My wife said that she had had quite enough exercise cooking the meal and that she was going upstairs to **have forty winks**.

My daughter, who was home for the weekend from her job in the city, also declined to join me. She said that she was going to ring round all her friends and catch up on all the local **girly chitchat**.

My son, Jeff, who was just about to start a university course at the other side of the country, said, at first, that he was going to read the Sunday papers. However, since it was likely to be some time before he had the pleasure of a walk in the country again, he agreed to accompany me.

By this time, it was **raining cats and dogs** and so we **donned** waterproof jackets and wellingtons and set off. We had hoped that the rain might ease off, but it continued to **come down in buckets**. We were on the point of returning home when Jeff came to a sudden halt and said, "What's that noise, Dad? It sounds like someone calling for help."

It was very windy and, at first, I couldn't hear anything, but when I listened hard I, too, thought I could hear someone calling. "But there's no one around," I said to my son.

Suddenly, we realized that the sound was coming from a disused well nearby and rushed over to it. There was obviously someone down there and my son immediately called the emergency services on his mobile. Meanwhile, I tried to make contact with the person at the bottom of the well.

It was a woman whose dog had fallen down the well shaft while **in hot pursuit** of a rabbit. She panicked and tried to climb down after the dog to rescue it. The result was that she, too, had got stuck there.

Dog and owner were rescued and were none the worse for the experience. "Just as well we decided to go for a **constitutional**, Dad!" said Jeff.

bucket, come down in buckets

This is a cliché, used in informal contexts, to mean to rain very heavily:

- *We had to cancel the picnic because it was **coming down in buckets.***
- *We had to cancel the picnic because it was **raining extremely heavily.***

Language Help

The expression rain cats and dogs (see *below*) has a similar meaning.

chitchat

This is an informal word meaning an informal conversation about things that are not very important. It can be replaced by a word such as **chat** or **gossip**:

- *This phone bill is far too high. Our daughters are spending too much time in **idle chitchat** with their friends.*
- *This phone bill is far too high. Our daughters are spending too much time in **idle gossip** with their friends.*

constitutional

This is an informal, rather dated, expression meaning a short walk taken as exercise that is good for your health. It can be replaced by a word or phrase from standard language such as **short walk** or **stroll**:

- *Dad always takes a **constitutional** along the seafront before lunch.*
- *Dad always takes a **stroll** along the seafront before lunch.*

don

This is a formal word meaning to put clothes on. It can be replaced by the simpler expression **put on**:

- *It was very cold and she **donned** a heavy sweater before taking the dog for a walk.*
- *It was very cold and she **put on** a heavy sweater before taking the dog for a walk.*

girly, girlie

This is an informal word referring to girls or young women. It can be replaced by the possessive case of the word **girl** or, sometimes, by a word such as **female** or **feminine**:

- *My sister and I have left our children with our husbands. We're having a **girly** evening out.*
- *My sister and I have left our children with our husbands. We're having a **girls'** evening out.*
- *Most of us decided to wear **girlie** outfits to the party, but Jane and Beth were dressed in jeans and T-shirts.*
- *Most of us decided to wear **feminine** outfits to the party, but Jane and Beth were dressed in jeans and T-shirts.*

leg, stretch your legs

This is an idiom which has become a cliché. It is used mainly in informal contexts and means to take a walk for exercise. The cliché can be avoided by using a phrase such as **go for a walk** or **take a walk**:

- *If you're thinking of **stretching your legs**, you could take the dog with you.*
- *If you're thinking of **going for a walk**, you could take the dog with you.*

pursuit, in hot pursuit

This expression means following someone or something closely. It can be replaced by an expression such as **chase, give chase to, run after, follow** or **pursue**:

- *We passed the farmer who was **in hot pursuit** of some boys who had been stealing apples from his orchard.*
- *We passed the farmer who was **chasing** some boys who had been stealing apples from his orchard.*

rain, rain cats and dogs

This is a cliché, used in informal contexts, meaning to rain very heavily. It is used in the same way as **come down in buckets** (see *above*) and can be replaced by the same expressions.

replete

This is a formal word meaning full in the sense of having a full stomach. It can be replaced by a simpler expression such as **full** or **full up**:

- *The dessert menu looked very tempting, but we were all **replete** and we just ordered coffee.*
- *The dessert menu looked very tempting, but we were all **full up** and we just ordered coffee.*

trimming, all the trimmings

This is a cliché meaning all the extra things that are traditionally associated with something. You can avoid the cliché by using a word such as **accompaniments**, **extras** or **additions**:

- *My sister and her family are vegetarians and so they don't have turkey and **all the trimmings** at Christmas.*
- *My sister and her family are vegetarians and so they don't have turkey and **all the accompaniments** at Christmas.*

wink, have forty winks

If you **have forty winks**, you have a short sleep. It is a cliché which can be replaced by an expression such as **have a short sleep**, **have a nap** or **take a nap**:

- *Grandfather always feels sleepy after lunch and he usually **has forty winks**.*
- *Grandfather always feels sleepy after lunch and he usually **has a nap**.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *My wife was in a cooking mood and had decided to treat us all to a traditional Sunday lunch, roast beef and **all the trimmings**.*

_____

_____

2. *After the meal, I felt the need to **stretch my legs** and asked if anyone felt like joining me.*

_____

_____

3. *She was going upstairs to **have forty winks**.*

_____

_____

4. *By this time, it was **raining cats and dogs** and so we **donned** waterproof jackets and wellingtons and set off.*

_____

_____

5. *It was a woman whose dog had fallen down the well shaft while **in hot pursuit** of a rabbit.*

_____

_____

B Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *His recent private behaviour will, inevitably, _____ from his reputation as a politician. (**detract / distract**)*
2. *Liz has a _____ for dress design, although she has had no formal training. (**flair / flare**)*
3. *Anna is a _____ shopper. That is why she is in serious debt. (**compulsive / compulsory**)*
4. *Bill has been very ill, but he looks _____ and hearty now. (**hail / hale**)*
5. *I met my husband, quite _____, at a party. I had gone with a friend and he had gone with a friend who knew my friend. (**fortuitously / fortunately**)*

C Tick the idiom that is similar in meaning to the word or phrase in bold in each sentence.

1. *Anne believed Ben implicitly, but he was **deceiving** her all the time.*
   - *a. lead someone up the garden path* ☐
   - *b. throw someone to the wolves* ☐
   - *c. stab someone in the back* ☐
   - *d. take someone to the cleaners* ☐
2. *Bill invested in Frank's business and **made a huge profit**, but he gambled away all the money.*
   - *a. throw money at something* ☐
   - *b. make a killing* ☐
   - *c. sow your wild oats* ☐
   - *d. pay through the nose for something* ☐
3. *Jane was upset when John got engaged to Anne, because she's always **been very fond of** him.*
   - *a. tug at the heartstrings* ☐
   - *b. get it in the neck* ☐
   - *c. have a soft spot for* ☐
   - *d. feel something in your bones* ☐
4. *We had not realized that Lucy **was involved in that activity**.*
   - *a. have a finger in the pie* ☐
   - *b. have your finger on the pulse* ☐
   - *c. have the hump* ☐
   - *d. sing for your supper* ☐
5. *If you're going to make a success of this business, you're going to have to **show a lot of energy and enthusiasm and not lose any time**.*
   - *a. hit the ground running* ☐
   - *b. have a whale of a time* ☐
   - *c. knock something on the head* ☐
   - *d. get your hands dirty* ☐

Sexism in language

he/she

Feminists who sought to bring equal rights and opportunities to women, and so objected to sex discrimination in the workplace and elsewhere, also brought attention to the issue of **sexism** in the language.

Before the changes in language, which the rise of feminism succeeded in bringing about, anyone whose sex was not known, or was not considered relevant, was assumed to be male, for example:

> *Every student must bring **his** gym kit to school tomorrow.*
> *Only members of staff may park in the firm's car park and each driver must display **his** parking permit.*

In modern usage, when attempts were first made to avoid this sexism, either **he or she** or, alternatively, **he/she**, replaced **he**:

> *Each departmental manager is responsible for the standard of work of **his** or **her** staff.*
> *Each departmental manager is responsible for the standard of work of **his/her** staff.*

People who regarded this structure as being clumsy could rewrite the sentence, using plural forms:

> *Departmental managers are responsible for the work of their staff.*

or else restructure the sentence.

More recently, many users have begun to use a plural pronoun with a singular noun:

> *Every student must bring **their** gym kit to school tomorrow.*

This was, until very recently, regarded as unacceptable, since it is technically ungrammatical, but it is becoming widely used, even in school textbooks and reference books.

person/man

Another example of sexism in language which was formerly common is the use of the suffix **-man**, when the sex of the person being referred to is either unknown

or not specified, as **chairman**. This use of **-man** is often now replaced by the suffix **-person**, as **chairperson**, although some people dislike this use and go on using **chairman**, *etc.* The substitution of **-person** should be used carefully.

The word **man** is also now replaced by **person** when the sex of the person referred to is either not known or not considered relevant. Thus, formerly, someone might say, *"It is important that we get the right **man** to join the sales team."* This would now be replaced by *"It is important that we get the right **person** to join the sales team".*

Exercise 2

Rewrite the following sentences so that they are non-sexist.

1. *The families of the accident victims have elected a spokesman to talk to the press.*

_____

_____

2. *Each parent must write down his child's name and date of birth.*

_____

3. *Every teacher must take his share of supervising detention.*

_____

4. *We need an extra salesman in the gift department at Christmas.*

_____

5. *Many a student regrets not having paid enough attention to his school work.*

_____

6. *It is necessary for the committee to appoint a new chairman.*

_____

7. *It's vital to get the right man for the job.*

_____

8. *Every single learner driver must pass his driving test before he drives on his own.*

_____

_____

9. *All men have a right to freedom of speech.*

_____

10. *Either worker may take his lunch break now.*

_____

Unit 16

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

Canine help

War is a complex procedure. Furthermore, the people who are actually involved in active warfare often know very little about this procedure. **The powers that be formulate** the strategy and then leave it to the ordinary soldiers to put it into action.

The practical problems have not always been taken into consideration by those who are not likely ever to be on the battlefield. It is often left to the soldiers on the ground to report back the **nuts and bolts** of the battle situation. By the time they are in a position to **put** their military masters **in the picture**, it is often too late.

One of the practical problems that soldiers face on the ground is the problem of transporting equipment and other **paraphernalia**. Troops are often sent to areas where the terrain is difficult and unfamiliar. It is tough enough to negotiate such hostile terrain without having to transport a lot of equipment. Weighed down by **cumbersome** loads on their backs, troops find that progress is slow, if not **well-nigh** impossible.

The US military authorities, having been made aware of this problem, are **bending over backwards** to find ways of relieving their soldiers of this burden. Often, US troops **toil** to haul equipment weighing hundreds of pounds across ground that wheeled vehicles cannot reach. Now the thoughts of the authorities are turning towards four-legged assistance.

They are considering canine help, but not the conventional sort. The US authorities are funding the development of a robotic dog which, they hope, will transport the **burdensome** equipment currently carried by soldiers. Their hope is that such canine robots will also carry out mine-sweeping exercises and surveillance as they go, thereby making the area much safer for soldiers.

Several companies have been commissioned to produce a prototype of such a robot. One of them describes their prototype dog as a robot of about one metre in length, powered by gasoline. It is equipped with radar and a computer so that it can see where it is going and can respond to things around it, as though it were a real animal.

Before the advent of trucks and tanks, soldiers were aided in their war work with pack horses and dogs. Now, they may be back to where they started, but with a difference.

backwards, bend over backwards

This is a cliché meaning to go to a great deal of trouble in order to do something. The cliché can be replaced by an expression such as **try very hard, try as hard as possible, do your very best** or **make every effort**:

- *We **bent over backwards** to make the French student feel welcome, but she was homesick all the time and returned to Paris within a short time.*
- *We **did our very best** to make the French student feel welcome, but she was homesick all the time and returned to Paris within a short time.*

burdensome

This is a formal word meaning, in the context of the passage, difficult to carry because of its weight. The word can be replaced by a simpler word such as **heavy** or **weighty**:

- *The hikers intended to camp out for a few days and they all carried **burdensome** backpacks.*
- *The hikers intended to camp out for a few days and they all carried **weighty** backpacks.*

cumbersome

This is a formal word which is similar in meaning to **burdensome** except that it also carries the suggestion that something is awkward to carry. It can be replaced by the word **awkward, unwieldy** or **unmanageable**:

- *The musicians had difficulty in carrying their **cumbersome** luggage to the airport check-in desk.*
- *The musicians had difficulty in carrying their **unwieldy** luggage to the airport check-in desk.*

formulate

This is a formal word meaning to draw up. It can be replaced by a simpler expression such as **prepare, draw up, put together** or **devise**:

- *The school principal says that a committee of teachers and parents has been set up to **formulate** a new bullying policy.*
- *The school principal says that a committee of teachers and parents has been set up to **put together** a new bullying policy.*

nut, nuts and bolts

This is a cliché which refers to the basic details of something. The cliché can be avoided by using an expression such as **basic, essential** or **practical details** or the word **practicality**:

- *Tom studied the theory of business management at college, but he learnt the **nuts and bolts** of running a business from his aunt, who owned a couple of successful dress shops in the town.*
- *Tom studied the theory of business management at college, but he learnt the **practicalities** of running a business from his aunt, who owned a couple of successful dress shops in the town.*

paraphernalia

This is a formal word that refers to a group of things that together are needed for a particular activity. It can be replaced by a simpler word such as **equipment, apparatus** or even **stuff** or **things**:

- *The artist who is painting Mrs Harrison's portrait needs somewhere to store his easel and the rest of his **paraphernalia**.*
- *The artist who is painting Mrs Harrison's portrait needs somewhere to store his easel and the rest of his **equipment**.*

picture, put someone in the picture

This is an idiom which has become a cliché. It means to give someone the information they need to understand a situation. The cliché can be avoided by using an expression such as **give someone all the necessary information**, a verb such as **brief** or **instruct**, or even the word **tell**, depending on the context:

- *Can you **put me in the picture** as to what's been going on in the office while I was on holiday?*

- *Can you **brief** me on what's been going on in the office while I was on holiday?*
- *Can you **tell** me what's been going on in the office while I was on holiday?*

power, the powers that be

This is a cliché which refers to those in authority. How you avoid the cliché depends on the context, but possible replacements, according to context, include **the authorities, the government, management, our leaders**, etc:

- ***The powers that be** have announced that we can have an extra half-day's holiday to celebrate the centenary of the firm.*
- ***Management** has announced that we can have an extra half-day's holiday to celebrate the centenary of the firm.*

toil

In the context of the passage, **toil** is a formal word meaning to work very hard. It can be replaced by **work hard, labour, exert yourself** or **struggle**:

- *The workers **toiled** long hours on the building site to complete the block of flats on time.*
- *The workers **laboured** long hours on the building site to complete the block of flats on time.*

well-nigh

This is a formal word meaning almost. It can be replaced by a simpler expression such as **almost, practically, very nearly** or **virtually**:

- *Tom has great ambitions, but most of them are **well-nigh** unachievable.*
- *Tom has great ambitions, but most of them are **practically** unachievable.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. ***The powers that be formulate** the strategy and then leave it to the ordinary soldiers to put it into action.*

_____

_____

2. *It is often left to the soldiers on the ground to report back the **nuts and bolts** of the battle situation.*

_____

_____

3. *By the time they are in a position to **put** their military masters **in the picture**, it is often too late.*

_____

_____

4. *One of the practical problems that soldiers face on the ground is the problem of transporting equipment and other **paraphernalia**.*

_____

_____

5. *Weighed down by* ***cumbersome*** *loads on their backs, troops find that progress is slow, if not* ***well-nigh*** *impossible.*

_____

_____

B Fill in the word missing from the idiom in each sentence.

1. *Your work is just not good enough. You should* ***shape up or*** _____ ***out.***
2. *I don't really care what Meg thinks of me. I'm certainly not going to* ***lose any*** _____ *over her criticism of me.*
3. *The business is very successful now, but it took us a long time to* ***get it up and*** _____ .
4. *We looked unsuccessfully for the first edition of the book for several years, but we eventually* ***ran it to*** _____ *in a small town near London.*
5. *The family feud was bad enough, but the fight between Jim and Jack just* _____ ***the flames.***

C Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *It is not* _____ *to ask the workers to do overtime when you have just refused to give them a rise. (* ***politic / political*** *)*
2. *The hotel* _____ *offered to call a taxi for us. (* ***commissionaire / commissioner*** *)*
3. *Mark was sitting drinking a glass of wine and listening to a* _____ *by Bach. (* ***suit / suite*** *)*
4. *A fox got into the hen* _____ *and killed three of the hens. (* ***coop / coup*** *)*
5. *David was an* _____ *worker for several years before he left the factory and went to college. (* ***industrial / industrious*** *)*

More about Language

"whose" and "who's"

The words **whose** and **who's** can cause confusion. They sound alike but have different meanings and some people use one wrongly instead of the other.

The word **whose** means *of whom* or *of which.*

*The woman **whose** child was injured was weeping.*
*The man **whose** car was damaged was very angry.*
***Whose** book is that?*
*The firm **whose** staff went on strike later went bankrupt.*

Some people object to the use of **whose** when it refers to a thing, as in *Can you repair this bike **whose** handlebars are bent?,* preferring to use **of which,** However, **whose** is perfectly acceptable and sounds more natural.

Who's is a shortened form of **who is,** as in:

***Who's** that?*
***Who's** first in the queue?*
***Who's** coming to the cinema?*

or **who has**?, as in:

***Who's** made all this mess?*
***Who's** borrowed my pen?*

Exercise 2

Insert either *whose* or *who's* in the blank in each sentence.

1. _____ *coat is this?*
2. _____ *going to make dinner tonight?*
3. _____ *the owner of this car?*
4. *The girl* _____ *dress was torn decided to go home.*
5. _____ *responsible for this mix-up?*
6. *Tom's repairing the table* _____ *legs have been kicked in.*
7. *The man* _____ *leg was broken was taken to hospital.*
8. *Meg works for the company* _____ *managing director was murdered.*
9. *Where's the computer* _____ *keyboard needs to be replaced?*
10. _____ *taken my parking place?*

Unit 17

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

Becoming a poet

People often ask me how I became a poet, and a professional poet at that. There are plenty of people who dabble in poetry as a kind of hobby, but not many are as fortunate as I am. I was lucky enough, quite early on, to get enough of my work published **to keep the wolf from the door**.

I certainly did not come from a literary background. Neither of my parents hardly ever read a book of any kind, let alone poetry. My father owned a grocer's shop and thought that every waking hour should be spent working and earning money. The shop was open from dawn to dusk.

There were periods of the day when the shop was as quiet as the grave. Then, Father would come upstairs to the flat where we lived above the shop. Either my long-suffering mother or I, if I were home from school, would be sent down to take his place behind the counter.

Standing behind the counter waiting for stray customers was **not a load of laughs** and I was often **bored out of my mind**. To pass the time I would often, **unbeknown to** my father, sneak a book down to read. Early in my school days I became a **voracious** reader. The local library was **an Aladdin's cave** to me. Our small town did not **boast** a bookshop, and I wouldn't have had the money to buy books, even if it did. Dad was rather **a Scrooge** when it came to pocket money.

One day I had dashed into the children's section of the library on my way home from school to work in the shop and had grabbed two or three books, more or less at random. Any reading material was better than none, in my opinion.

When I got to the shop I realized that I had selected, by mistake, I must admit, an anthology of poetry, entitled *A Child's Garden of Verse*. I read it with so much enthusiasm that I almost forgot to serve the customers that came into the shop. I was **hooked on** poetry for life.

For a while, I was content to read the works of others, but, when I was about ten, I saw an advertisement in a children's newspaper for a children's poetry competition. I decided to send in an entry and, to my amazement, won it. Thus, began my career as a published poet and I **never looked back**.

Vocabulary Study

boast

In the context of the passage, **boast** is a formal word meaning to have something that is an advantage or something to be proud of. It can be replaced by **have, possess** or **contain**:

- *The brochure said that the hotel **boasted** a large swimming pool, but it was, in fact, little more than a paddling pool.*
- *The brochure said that the hotel **contained** a large swimming pool, but it was, in fact, little more than a paddling pool.*

bored, bored out of your mind

The expression **bored out of your mind** is a cliché which is used, usually in informal contexts, to emphasize the extent of the boredom. The cliché can be avoided by using an expression which adds emphasis to the word **bored**, such as **extremely bored, exceedingly bored, utterly bored**:

- *John has to stay in bed while he recovers from his operation and he is **bored out of his mind**.*
- *John has to stay in bed while he recovers from his operation and he is **utterly bored**.*

cave, an Aladdin's cave

This is an idiom which is used to describe a store of objects which are very desirable in some way. It can be replaced by the expression **treasure house**:

- *At the end of the street there was a shop which sold only chocolate goods and the local children regarded it as **an Aladdin's cave** of all their favourite things.*
- *At the end of the street there was a shop which sold only chocolate goods and the local children regarded it as **a treasure house** of all their favourite things.*

hook, hooked on

This is an informal expression which means to be addicted to or dependent on something such as drugs. It can also mean, as in the passage, to be very interested in something or to like something very much. There are several ways of expressing this idea in standard language. You can use such expressions as **keen on, a fan of, fond of, interested in, a great interest in**, etc:

- *John is **hooked on** horror movies, but I refuse to watch them with him because they terrify me.*
- *John is **a fan of** horror movies, but I refuse to watch them with him because they terrify me.*

laugh, not a load of laughs

This expression is used in informal contexts to emphasize that something is not at all interesting or amusing. It can be replaced by making a positive, rather than a negative, statement and using a word such as **boring, dull, tedious** or **uninteresting**:

- *Lying flat on a hospital bed all day while my wound healed wasn't **a load of laughs**.*
- *Lying flat on a hospital bed all day while my wound healed was **tedious**.*

Language Help

This is an example of **litotes**, a figure of speech which is a kind of understatement. A positive statement is achieved by denying its opposite.

look, never looked back

This is a cliché which you can use if you wish to emphasize that, after a particular event, you went on to do very well. You can avoid the cliché by rewording the sentence and using a word such as **success** or **successful**:

- *Bob got a record contract as a prize for winning the talent competition and **never looked back**.*
- *Bob got a record contract as a prize for winning the talent competition and **went on to be more and more successful**.*
- *Bob got a record contract after winning the talent competition and **went on achieving success**.*

Scrooge, a Scrooge

This is an expression used to describe someone who is very mean with money. It can be replaced by the use of an adjective such as **mean, miserly** or **stingy**, or by using the noun **miser**:

- *Our boss is **a Scrooge**. He pays very low wages and never gives us a bonus, no matter how hard we work.*
- *Our boss is **very mean**. He pays very low wages and never gives us a bonus, no matter how hard we work.*

Language Help

Scrooge is the name of the main character in *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens and he was an extremely mean person.

unbeknown to someone

This is used in formal or literary contexts to indicate that something is unknown to someone. You can replace the expression with the simpler expression **without someone knowing**, or you can reword the sentence and use an expression such as **someone does not know** or **someone is unaware**:

- ***Unbeknown to*** *Anne, the times of the trains had been changed and she had missed the last train.*
- *Anne* ***didn't know it****, but the times of the trains had been changed and she had missed the last train.*
- ***Unbeknown to*** *Mike, his younger brother had borrowed his car and damaged it.*
- ***Without*** *Mike* ***knowing****, his younger brother had borrowed his car and damaged it.*

voracious

This is a formal word which means, literally, having a very large appetite for food. However, as in the passage, it can also be applied to activities other than eating. A **voracious** reader is someone who reads a great deal. The formal word can be replaced by a simpler expression such as **enthusiastic** or **avid**:

- *My mother is a* ***voracious*** *reader and I find it difficult to keep her supplied with library books.*
- *My mother is an* ***avid*** *reader and I find it difficult to keep her supplied with library books.*
- *My mother reads* ***a great deal*** *and I find it difficult to keep her supplied with library books.*

wolf, keep the wolf from the door

This is an idiom which means to succeed in making enough money to live on. The cliché can be avoided by an expression such as **make a living, earn a living, earn enough to live on**:

- *Jill doesn't make a lot of money from her writing, but she* ***keeps the wolf from the door.***
- *Jill doesn't make a lot of money from her writing, but* ***she makes a living from it.***

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *I was lucky enough, quite early on, to get enough of my work published* ***to keep the wolf from the door.***

_____

_____

2. *I was often* ***bored out of my mind.***

_____

3. *Our small town did not* ***boast*** *a bookshop, and I wouldn't have had the money to buy books, even if it did.*

_____

_____

4. *Dad was rather* ***a Scrooge*** *when it came to pocket money.*

_____

5. *Thus, began my career as a published poet and I* ***never looked back.***

_____

_____

B Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *The* _____ *on the graveyard read "Gone to a better place". (* ***epitaph / epithet*** *)*
2. *Jim gave a* _____ *of delight when he won the match. (* ***hoop / whoop*** *)*
3. *George thinks that he is the* _____ *of all knowledge, but he is not particularly clever. (* ***font / fount*** *)*
4. *We need some* _____ *of wood to repair this ceiling. (* ***lathes / laths*** *)*
5. *Ask John to help select the wines for your dinner party. He is very* _____ *in his choice of wines. (* ***discriminating / discriminatory*** *)*

C Replace the expressions in bold in the following sentences with simpler words or expressions.

1. *The film which we went to see last night had got very good reviews, but we thought that* ***it was nothing to write home about.***

_____

_____

2. *Jane, you should put some make-up on. You look* ***like death warmed up*** *after last night's party.*

_____

_____

3. *The meal that Jane served last night was* ***fit for a king.***

_____

4. *The police thought that Mike's account of the attack didn't* ***ring true*** *and they arrested him.*

_____

_____

5. *We went to a disco last night and thoroughly enjoyed it. It's a long time since we* ***tripped the light fantastic.***

_____

_____

More about Language

"get"

Some words in English are very much overused and one of the most overused is **get**. You should look for a substitute for it if you find yourself using it frequently. **Get** has several meanings. The following are some synonyms for the various meanings:

> **1** fetch, bring, carry, collect, transport **2** (*with reference to a meal, etc*) prepare, get ready, make, cook **3** persuade, talk into, coax, induce **4** arrive, reach **5** contact, get in touch with, communicate with **6** obtain, acquire, get hold of **7** catch, arrest, capture **8** become, grow, come to be **9** (*with reference to money, etc*) receive, be given, be paid **10** understand, take in, comprehend, grasp.

Exercise 2

Replace each example of *get* with a suitable word in brackets.

My Aunt Mary was not feeling very well. She looked very pale and **got** *(_____) tired very easily. As she was rather elderly, I was worried about her. It was difficult to* **get** *(_____) her to call the doctor, but, finally, she agreed.*

I phoned him, but failed to **get** *(_____) him because he was doing house calls. I left a message with his receptionist and he* **got** *(_____) to my aunt's house not long after that. By this time, it was after midday and I had started* **getting** *(_____) lunch for my aunt and me.*

The doctor seemed to be spending a long time with my aunt, and I went in to see if anything was wrong. When I went into the room, the doctor was explaining to my aunt that he wanted her to go to hospital for tests. I knew that my aunt was quite aware of what he meant, but she was pretending

that she didn't **get** *(_____) what the doctor was saying.This was because she didn't want to go to hospital.*

She told the doctor that she was just a little tired because she was not sleeping very well. She thought that if she **got** *(_____) some sleeping pills she would be fine. However, the doctor insisted and my aunt went in for tests. I am happy to say that, once she* **got** *(_____) the proper medication, she* **got** *(_____) better quickly.*

Unit 18

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

Green hair

I'm absolutely **gutted**. Harry, my new boyfriend, has asked me to go to his firm's dance with him next week. It's to be a lavish **do** with the men in **penguin suits** and the women in formal dresses. I really need to look my best. I want Harry to be proud of me because I really like him.

At the weekend I **splashed out** on the most gorgeous designer dress. I really shouldn't have done it. I don't know when I'll wear it again. I don't go to many formal things.

Then I decided I just had to do something about my hair. My hairstyle was **so last year**. So I decided to get it restyled and get some highlights added, **for good measure**. I couldn't afford it, but I persuaded my boss to give me a **sub** against next month's salary.

I made an appointment at my usual hairdresser's in the high street. When I got there today, I discovered that my usual hairdresser had left, but I wasn't worried. They're usually all good in that salon, I thought. But I was wrong!

I wasn't paying much attention when the colour was being done. I was absorbed in a pile of **glossies**. Even when the colour was rinsed off and my hair shampooed, I didn't realize how bad things were, probably because of the odd, ultra-modern lighting in the salon.

I did notice that the stylist wasn't very skilled with a pair of scissors, though, and I hastily changed my mind about getting a restyle. I settled for a trim.

My brother was picking me up from the shop and he started **laughing like a drain** when he saw me. "What on earth have you done to your hair? It's turned bright green!" he said when he stopped laughing.

It was a bit of an exaggeration, but not much. The so-called highlights did, indeed, look green, as I saw when I got home and looked in a mirror. I completely **lost it** and started to scream and shout.

Mum eventually calmed me down. She assures me that something can be done to get my hair back to normal. She says that her hairdresser will be able to repair the damage. It'll be expensive, but Mum's going to lend me the money for it. I don't care what it costs as long as my hair gets back to normal. Meanwhile, I'm not looking in the mirror!

Vocabulary Study

do

This is an informal word used to refer to a social event. It can be replaced by an expression such as **party**:

- *We're having a **do** for my sister's eighteenth birthday and you're all invited.*
- *We're having a **party** for my sister's eighteenth birthday and you're all invited.*

drain, laugh like a drain

This is a cliché which is used in informal contexts to emphasize how loudly someone is laughing. The cliché can be avoided by using an expression such as **laugh heartily** or **roar with laughter**:

- *Instead of sympathizing with me when I slipped on a banana skin, my friend **laughed like a drain**.*
- *Instead of sympathizing with me when I slipped on a banana skin, my friend **roared with laughter**.*

Language Help

The origin of the expression is that the noise of the laughter is likened to the noise made by water going down a drain.

glossy

This is an informal word used to describe a magazine which is printed on glossy paper with a lot of illustrations and photographs. You can replace it with the term **glossy magazine** or just **magazine**:

- *Meg lent me one of her **glossies** to read on the train.*
- *Meg lent me one of her **magazines** to read on the train.*

gutted

This is an informal word meaning very disappointed. It can be replaced by using the word **disappointed, upset, saddened** or **depressed**:

- *Ben was **gutted** when he heard that he had failed his university exams.*
- *Ben was **terribly upset** when he heard that he had failed his university exams.*

lose, lose it

This is an informal expression used to indicate that someone has lost their temper. It can be replaced by an expression such as **lose one's temper, get extremely angry, fly into a rage** or **become enraged**:

- *Jim is usually a very calm person, but he really **lost it** when Pete made a nasty remark about Jim's wife.*
- *Jim is usually a very calm person, but he really **flew into a rage** when Pete made a nasty remark about Jim's wife.*

measure, for good measure

If you do something **for good measure**, you do or give something in addition to something else, often something that is not essential but which will improve things in some way. The expression is a cliché which can be replaced by the word **extra** or, sometimes, the word **bonus**:

- *The holiday company sent us our travel documents for our trip to Madrid and, **for good measure**, included a city guidebook.*
- *The holiday company sent us our travel documents for our trip to Madrid and, **as an extra**, included a city guidebook.*

splash, splash out

This is an informal expression which indicates extravagant spending. It can be replaced by an expression such as **spend a great deal of money** or **be extravagant**:

- *We're certainly not wealthy, but we only have one daughter and we're going to **splash out** on her wedding.*
- *We're certainly not wealthy, but we only have one daughter and we're going to **spend a great deal of money** on her wedding.*
- *This is the first Christmas for ten years that our family has been all together and we're going to **splash out**.*
- *This is the first Christmas for ten years that our family has been all together and we're going to **be extravagant**.*

sub

This is an informal word used to describe a small sum of money which is borrowed from an employer, etc, and has to be repaid from the next salary or wage payment. It can be replaced by the word **advance** or **loan**:

- *My parents give me an allowance each month, but I'm completely out of money this month and I'm going to have to ask for a **sub** against next month's payment.*
- *My parents give me an allowance each month, but I'm completely out of money this month and I'm going to have to ask for an **advance** against next month's payment.*

suit, penguin suit

This is an informal expression used to describe humorously a man's formal wear. It can be replaced by the expression **dinner suit** or **evening wear**:

- *The reception is formal and Jack is going to have to hire a **penguin suit**.*
- *The reception is formal and Jack is going to have to hire a **dinner suit**.*

Language Help

A man in a black dinner suit, white shirt and black bow tie is thought to resemble a penguin in appearance.

year, so last year

This is an informal expression, often used in humorous contexts, to indicate that something is no longer fashionable. It can be replaced by a word such as **old-fashioned, dated, out of date** or **out-dated**:

- *My teenage daughter says that she can't wear her flared jeans any more because they're **so last year**.*
- *My teenage daughter says that she can't wear her flared jeans any more because they're **so out-dated**.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *I'm absolutely **gutted**.*

_____

2. *At the weekend I **splashed out** on the most gorgeous designer dress.*

_____

3. *My hairstyle was **so last year**.*

_____

4. *So I decided to get it restyled and get some highlights added, **for good measure**.*

_____

_____

5. *My brother was picking me up from the shop and he started **laughing like a drain** when he saw me.*

_____

_____

B Complete each of the following similes with an appropriate word.

1. *Don't underestimate Bob because he's* ***as wily as a*** _____ .
2. *Why has Jill gone on a diet? She's* ***as thin as a*** _____ .
3. *Bill was ill for a long time, but he says that he's now* ***as*** _____ ***as a fiddle.***
4. *This meat is* ***as tough as old*** _____ .
5. *Meg is quite independent, although she always acts as if she's* ***as helpless as a*** _____ ***in arms.***

C Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *Some of the old people in the village insist on* _____ *these age-old traditions associated with witchcraft. (* ***perpetrating / perpetuating*** *)*
2. *We don't have enough money to go to the States. We'll have to* _____ *our holiday plans until next year. (* ***shelf / shelve*** *)*
3. *There was a* _____ *smell of burning rubber and we discovered that the children were burning tyres on their bonfire. (* ***poignant / pungent*** *)*
4. *I've met him at various business meetings and at the occasional* _____ *function. (* ***sociable / social*** *)*
5. *It was extremely hot and all the men were wearing* _____ *. (* ***topees / toupees*** *)*

"you're" and "your"

Your and **you're** are liable to be confused because they sound alike.

Your is a possessive adjective meaning belonging to you:

That is ***your*** *book and this is mine.*
It was not ***your*** *fault; it was his.*
Looking after the children is ***your*** *responsibility.*

You're is a shortened form of **you are**:

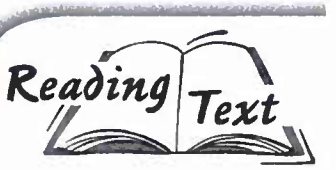
> ***You're*** *going to be late.*
> ***You're*** *the best player in the team.*
> ***You're*** *sure to be invited to the party.*

Exercise 2

Underline *your* or *you're* in the following sentences, whichever is correct.

1. ***Your / You're*** *not supposed to park here.*
2. *I know that* ***your / you're*** *planning to leave.*
3. *You've forgotten* ***your / you're*** *gloves and* ***your / you're*** *scarf.*
4. *We wonder what* ***your / you're*** *plans are.*
5. *It's difficult to know why* ***your / you're*** *behaving like this.*
6. ***Your / You're*** *action was quite unacceptable.*
7. *I don't know* ***your / you're*** *date of birth.*
8. ***Your / You're*** *deliberately deceiving* ***your / you're*** *family and friends.*
9. ***Your / You're*** *sure that you left* ***your / you're*** *car here?*
10. *I can understand why* ***your / you're*** *taking the news so badly.*

Unit 19



Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

A disastrous holiday

Dear Jean

You're probably wondering why I didn't send you a postcard. The answer is that I just couldn't face sending any. I could hardly write "Wish you were here!" when we were in the middle of the holiday **from hell**. Right **from the word go** everything that could go wrong did go wrong.

We had decided to go to the airport by taxi. That would save us the **hassle** of coping with the heavy traffic on the way and the problem of finding somewhere to park.

That was the theory, anyway. However, the taxi didn't **show**. Fortunately, we had allowed plenty of time to get there and I phoned the taxi firm. The taxi firm's receptionist said that we hadn't made a booking, and I had a big argument with her about it.

Eventually, the taxi arrived and we were on our way. On arrival at the airport, I was horrified to see the length of the queues. But I needn't have worried! Our flight was delayed, and delayed, and delayed. It left six hours late and by this time we were all **worn to a frazzle.**

Mike and I were relatively lucky in that we were travelling by ourselves. **Our hearts went out to** people who were travelling with children. They were tired, hungry and thirsty and the airport facilities weren't up to coping with the scale of the problem. The children **grizzled** and the parents, quite understandably, lost their tempers.

The plane journey was reasonably uneventful and Mike and I decided that things were **on the up and up.** We were wrong, as we were to find out!

When we arrived at the Spanish airport, we discovered that there was a delay in the arrival of the luggage. "That's **par for the course,**" we thought, since, by now, we were used to things going wrong . However, when the luggage eventually appeared, we, once again, felt optimistic. We were wrong, yet again.

Our luggage wasn't there! It hadn't made it on to the plane! The airport authorities said that they didn't know when it would arrive, but that they would send it to our

holiday apartment when it did. We thought that this was **a fat lot of good**, but were too tired to argue. Exhausted, we got into a taxi and set off for our apartment.

On arrival, we discovered that the apartment was in a bad state of repair and absolutely filthy. Now you see why I didn't send you a card!

Love

Diana

Vocabulary Study

frazzle, worn to a frazzle

This is an informal expression meaning very tired. It can be replaced by using an expression such as **exhausted, tired out, worn out** or **fatigued**:

- *I've been looking after my sister's two children all day and I'm **worn to a frazzle**.*
- *I've been looking after my sister's two children all day and I'm **exhausted**.*

go, from the word go

This is a cliché, mostly used in informal contexts, to emphasize that something has happened, been true, etc, from the beginning. The cliché can be replaced by using an expression such as **from the very beginning, from the very start, right from the beginning** or **right from the start**:

- *Jim and Mary were very much in love, but their marriage was obviously a mistake **from the word go** and they filed for divorce within a very short time.*
- *Jim and Mary were very much in love, but their marriage was obviously a mistake **from the very beginning** and they filed for divorce within a very short time.*

good, a fat lot of good

This is a cliché used in informal contexts to indicate that something is not at all useful. You can avoid the cliché by using an expression such as **no use, not at all useful, of no help** or **not at all helpful**:

- *The station master says that there's a train at six tomorrow morning, but that's **a fat lot of good** to me. I absolutely have to get back to the city tonight.*
- *The station master says that there's a train at six tomorrow morning, but that's **of no help** to me. I absolutely have to get back to the city tonight.*

grizzle

This is an informal word used of a child and meaning to cry or complain continuously. It can be replaced by the word **whine** or the word **wail**:

- *It was a terrible train journey. Both the children **grizzled** the whole journey.*
- *It was a terrible train journey. Both the children **whined** the whole journey.*

hassle

This is an informal expression which is used, in the context of the passage, to refer to a troublesome situation. You can replace it with a word such as **problem, trouble, bother** or **nuisance**:

- *It's such a **hassle** taking three children abroad on holiday that we've decided to rent a holiday cottage near home this year.*
- *It's such a **problem** taking three children abroad on holiday that we've decided to rent a holiday cottage near home this year.*

heart, my heart goes out to

This is a cliché which you use when you want o indicate to someone that you have sympathy for them. You can replace it by using an expression such as **feel sorry for, sympathize with, pity** or **feel for**:

- ***My heart goes out to** Jane. Her husband has been seriously injured in a car accident and she has two young children.*
- ***I feel very sorry for** Jane. Her husband has been seriously injured in a car accident and she has two young children.*

hell, from hell

This is an informal expression used to describe someone or something that is exceptionally unpleasant. You can replace it with an expression such as **very nasty, extremely unpleasant, most disagreeable** or **absolutely dreadful**:

- *Bill was the flatmate **from hell**. He was extremely untidy, played very loud music, never bought any food but used everyone else's, and was rude to everyone.*
- *Bill was an **absolutely dreadful** flatmate. He was extremely untidy, played very loud music, never bought any food but used everyone else's, and was rude to everyone.*

par, par for the course

This is a cliché used to indicate that things have happened in the way that they were expected to. You can replace the cliché by using an expression as **be expected, be as you would expect, be typical**, etc:

- *"Sue's just phoned in to say that she's sick and not coming in today."*
  *"That's **par for the course**. We're all having to work overtime tonight and Sue always manages to avoid it."*
- *"Sue's just phoned in to say that she's sick and not coming in today."*
  *"That's to **be expected**. We're all having to work overtime tonight and Sue always manages to avoid it."*
- *"Sue's just phoned in to say that she's sick and not coming in today."*
  *"That's **typical**. We're all having to work overtime tonight and Sue always manages to avoid it."*

show

This is an informal word meaning to arrive. It can be replaced by an expression such as **appear, arrive, come, turn up**:

- *I had arranged to see the film with my friend. I waited for him outside the cinema for half an hour, but he didn't **show**.*
- *I had arranged to see the film with my friend. I waited for him outside the cinema for half an hour, but he didn't **appear**.*

up, on the up and up

This is an informal expression used to indicate that things are getting better. You can replace it with an expression such as **get better** or **improve**:

- *For a while Jim was unemployed, very poor and unhappy, but now he's found a job and things are **on the up and up** for him now.*
- *For a while Jim was unemployed, very poor and unhappy, but now he's found a job and things are **getting better** for him now.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *Right **from the word go** everything that could go wrong did go wrong.*

_____

_____

2. *That would save us the **hassle** of coping with the heavy traffic on the way and the problem of finding somewhere to park.*

_____

_____

3. *It left six hours late and by this time we were all **worn to a frazzle**.*

_____

4. *The children* ***grizzled*** *and the parents, quite understandably, lost their tempers.*

_____

_____

5. *The plane journey was reasonably uneventful and Mike and I decided that things were* ***on the up and up****.*

_____

_____

B Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *Sue has got a job as the* _____ *of a youth hostel. (* ***warden / warder*** *)*
2. *There was always* _____ *between the two brothers and it got worse when they began to share a flat together. (* ***strife / strive*** *)*
3. *Mary had a* _____ *ambition to learn to fly. (* ***lifelong / livelong*** *)*
4. *The king was very ill in the last year of his* _____ *. (* ***reign / rein*** *)*
5. *Anne was asked to give evidence on behalf of the* _____ *. (* ***plaintiff / plaintive*** *)*

C Rewrite the following sentences, omitting any redundant words.

1. *The principal expressed his gratitude to the teachers for all their hard work and thanked them.*

_____

_____

2. *Ben played a vital role in the organization and he performed an important function in it.*

_____

_____

3. *Jane has gone to the chemist's to buy a depilatory that will remove body hair.*

_____

_____

4. *People are saying that the firm has gone bankrupt, but, at the moment, this is all just guesswork and speculation.*

_____

_____

5. *Lucy is poorly and not very well, but she has to go to work to get money to feed her children.*

_____

_____

Gender in grammar

In grammar, **gender** refers to the grammatical classification of nouns as **masculine, feminine** and **neuter.** In several languages, such as French, all nouns are classified as either masculine or feminine, although many of these refer to inanimate objects.

In English, however, nouns which are classified as **masculine** refer to male people or animals, as **boy, father** and **bull.** Similarly, nouns which are classified as **feminine** refer to female people or animals, as **girl, mother** and **cow.** Nouns which refer to inanimate objects are classified as **neuter,** as **table, gate** and **lamp.**

Nouns that can be used of either male or female are sometimes classified as **common** gender, as **infant, teacher** and **lawyer.**

Differences between male and female gender are shown in one of three ways:

1 by the use of a different word, as **brother/sister, bull/cow**

2 by the use of a change of word ending, as **prince/princess, lion/lioness**

3 more rarely, by the use of a masculine or feminine noun as a prefix or suffix, as **bride/bridegroom, cock-sparrow, hen-sparrow**

Note that the use of the feminine suffix **-ess** is not nearly as common as it once was when applied to people. When the issue of sexism in language arose, it was felt that the use of **-ess** to identify a female *poet, editor, manager, author,* etc, was unnecessary and even patronizing. It is more common now simply to use *poet, editor, manager* and *author.* The present situation with regard to this is confusing because some **-ess** forms are still retained. They are retained in such words as **princess, duchess** and **countess.** The word **actress** is still quite common, as is the word **hostess,** as are some occupation titles such as **waitress** and **stewardess.**

Exercise 2

A Give the gender of each noun.

bitch	: _____	*heroine*	: _____
nephew	: _____	*buck*	: _____
carpet	: _____	*vixen*	: _____
count	: _____	*widower*	: _____
ewe	: _____	*waitress*	: _____
lecture	: _____	*beggarman*	: _____

B Give the masculine or feminine equivalent of each noun.

billy goat	: _____	*duck*	: _____
sow	: _____	*gander*	: _____
jackass	: _____	*duchess*	: _____
mare	: _____	*cob*	: _____
manservant	: _____	*steward*	: _____
hen	: _____	*author*	: _____

Unit 20

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

An adventure goes wrong

The Morgan family had taken a house for a fortnight of the summer holiday and had just arrived. "You two are to stay right here until your mother and I get back," said Mike Morgan to his children. "No exploring the countryside on your own! Your mum and I are going to **do** a quick **recce** of the town and get some food for dinner."

"Do you think we've done the right thing leaving Jeff and Jane **on their tod**?" Liz Morgan asked her husband worriedly.

"Why not?" asked Mr Morgan. "We won't be long. Surely they won't get into any trouble in such a short time. I did **read** them **the riot act** before we left."

"These are our twins we're talking about, Mike," said Mrs Morgan. "They can, and frequently do, get into trouble, any time, any place. They can turn the most **innocuous** place into a danger zone within a few minutes. And they were **as high as kites** when we left."

"Relax, Liz. You're on holiday. The kids will be OK."

"I wish I had your confidence," replied his wife.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Jeff and Jane were already beginning to feel bored.

"We can't go out, but we can explore the house," said Jeff. "Let's start with the cellars. There's a door in the kitchen leading down to them. Look, the key's hanging above the door!"

The stairs were very steep and it was pitch dark. They'd had the forethought to bring a torch, but it wasn't a very strong one.

"I'm not sure I like it down here," said Jane. "It's **scary**!"

"Don't be **chicken**," said Jeff. "We want to explore, don't we?"

Suddenly there was a loud bang. "What was that?" asked Jane in a scared voice.

"I think it was the cellar door, but you've got the key, haven't you?" replied Jeff.

"No, I haven't. I must have left it in the door," said Jane.

"You **ninny**!" shouted Jeff. "We're **for it** now. Dad'll be furious. What are we going to do?"

"We can phone Mum and Dad on the mobile," said Jane. "You've got it with you, haven't you?"

"Er, no. I left it on the kitchen table."

"Who's the ninny now?" asked Jane angrily.

"We might not have a very good signal down here anyway," said Jeff defensively.

They banged and banged on the door and got very cold and very frightened. Fortunately, their parents soon rescued them.

"And you said the twins wouldn't get into any trouble!" said Liz to Mike.

Vocabulary Study

chicken

In the context of the passage, **chicken** is an informal word used to describe someone who is not at all brave. It can be replaced with a reference to **cowardly** or **coward**:

- *Tom's friends said that he was too **chicken** to ask Liz out on a date.*
- *Tom's friends said that he was too much of **a coward** to ask Liz out on a date.*
- *Tom's friends said that he was too **cowardly** to ask Liz out on a date.*

for, for it

This is an informal expression indicating that someone is very likely to be punished in some way for something. It can be replaced by an expression which uses the word **reprimand, rebuke, scold, punish** or **discipline**:

- *We're **for it** if we're late home again. Dad will be furious!*
- *We'll be **punished** if we're late home again. Dad will be furious!*

innocuous

This is a formal word meaning not dangerous. You can use a simpler expression such as **harmless, not harmful** or **safe**, according to the context:

- *The substance looked **innocuous**, but it was extremely poisonous.*
- *The substance looked **harmless**, but it was extremely poisonous.*

kite, as high as a kite

This is a cliché, used in informal contexts, to indicate great excitement. It can be replaced by an expression such as **extremely excited** or **over-excited**:

- *It was Christmas Eve and the child was **as high as a kite** wondering when Father Christmas would come.*
- *It was Christmas Eve and the child was **exceedingly excited** wondering when Father Christmas would come.*

ninny

This is an informal word meaning a stupid or foolish person. It can be replaced by a word such as **fool** or **idiot**:

- *Amy was a **ninny** to believe what Tom said. We all know that he's always playing practical jokes.*
- *Amy was an **idiot** to believe what Tom said. We all know that he's always playing practical jokes.*

ranch, meanwhile, back at the ranch

This is cliché which is used to indicate that the teller of a story is once again describing what is

happening at the main location of the story, having been describing the action at another location. If you are avoiding the cliché, you can simply mention the main location by name or description:

- *The principal and some of the older students had gone to an art exhibition in the city.* ***Meanwhile, back at the ranch,*** *two students doing a science experiment set the lab on fire.*
- *The principal and some of the older students had gone to an art exhibition in the city.* ***Meanwhile, back at the school,*** *two students doing a science experiment set the lab on fire.*

Language Help

In origin, the expression refers to the old silent Western films where a caption sometimes indicated that the action had switched back to the ranch from the scene of a fight, etc.

recce, do a recce

The word **recce** is an informal word which is an abbreviated form of the formal word **reconnaissance. Do a recce** can be replaced by an expression such as **have a look round, look over** or **investigate**:

- *The first thing that Bill did on his arrival in the town was to* ***do a recce*** *of all the nightclubs.*
- *The first thing that Bill did on his arrival in the town was to* ***investigate*** *all the nightclubs.*

riot, read the riot act

This is a cliché meaning to rebuke someone angrily for doing something wrong and warn them not to do it again. The cliché can be avoided by the use of a word such as **lecture, scold, rebuke** or **reprimand**:

- *I didn't do very well in the exam and my father* ***read the riot act*** *about not studying enough.*
- *I didn't do very well in the exam and my father* ***lectured*** *me about not studying enough.*

scary

This is an informal word meaning causing someone to be scared. It can be replaced by the word **frightening**:

- *The child said that she found the film* ***scary.***
- *The child said that she found the film* ***frightening.***

tod, on your tod

This is an informal expression meaning without anyone with you. It can be replaced by an expression such as **on your own, by yourself** or **alone**:

- *If none of you want to see the film, I'll go to the cinema* ***on my tod.***
- *If none of you want to see the film, I'll go to the cinema* ***by myself.***

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *Your mum and I are going to* ***do a*** *quick* ***recce*** *of the town and get some food for dinner.*

_____

_____

2. *I did* ***read*** *them* ***the riot act*** *before we left.*

_____

3. *They can turn the most* ***innocuous*** *place into a danger zone within a few minutes.*

_____

_____

4. *And they were* ***as high as kites*** *when we left.*

_____

5. *"Don't be* ***chicken,"*** *said Jeff. "We want to explore, don't we?"*

_____

B Rewrite the following sentences, replacing the words or expressions in bold with simpler words or expressions.

1. *The huge figure moved* ***ponderously*** *towards them.*

_____

2. *Your remarks are not* ***germane*** *to the issue.*

_____

3. *The word can mean that, but not in this context. It* ***is polysemous.***

_____

4. *Mike* ***has misogynistic feelings*** *and upset some of the women members by some of his chauvinist remarks.*

_____

_____

C Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *Mary heard the news and* _____ *to cry and shake uncontrollably.* (***preceded / proceeded***)
2. *John was* _____ *to get involved in the argument but he felt that he had to support his friend.* (***loath / loathe***)
3. *Sue had lost some weight and her clothes had become rather* _____ . (***lose / loose***)
4. *A man called to read the gas* _____ . (***meter / metre***)
5. *One of Bob's hobbies is* _____ *fishing.* (***coarse / course***)

Litotes

Litotes is a figure of speech which is a kind of understatement. A positive statement is achieved by denying its opposite:

*He is a citizen **of no mean city**.* (= He is a citizen of quite a great city.)
*Pam is **not exactly generous**.* (= Pam is rather mean.)

Exercise 2

Rewrite each sentence, changing the expression in bold, to make a positive statement.

1. *His contribution to the war effort was **by no means negligible**.*

   _____

2. *Archie is not as poor as he pretends to be. Where he lives is **no humble abode**.*

   _____

   _____

3. *I wish you luck in getting any information from Joan Brown. She's **not exactly communicative**.*

   _____

   _____

4. *John's misfortunes were, **in no small measure**, a result of his reckless behaviour.*

   _____

   _____

5. *I don't understand why they've offered Tom such a low salary. He's **hardly an inexperienced salesman**.*

   _____

   _____

6. *I was looking forward to taking part in the race and hoped to win, but I realized that it would be* ***no easy task.***

_____

_____

7. *Father was* ***not a little upset*** *when he saw the damage to his car.*

_____

8. *The rain is pouring down and the airline has lost our luggage. We are* ***not exactly in holiday mood.***

_____

_____

9. *Why does your mother think she has to supervise Ben when he's cooking the meal? We all know that he's* ***no novice when it comes to cooking.***

_____

_____

10. *Bill is* ***more than a little jealous*** *of his elder brother's success.*

_____

Unit 21

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

Leopards on the loose

One of Bombay's most fashionable suburbs is facing an unusual problem. The residents of Powai are being terrorized by leopards. At least 12 people have been killed in the area and many dozens more have been injured.

The streets of suburbia are not the kind of territory where you expect to find leopards. Furthermore, these big cats have an instinctive fear of human beings and usually **give them a wide berth**. Suddenly, leopards seem to have lost their natural fear of humans, with disastrous results for the people of Powai.

Naturalists are puzzled and concerned at this **metamorphosis** in the behaviour of leopards. The usual prey of leopards is deer and there is a ready supply of these in the National Park, which is the sanctuary of the leopards. However, they are increasingly turning their backs on their usual prey and feeding on stray dogs.

It is **surmised** that one of the reasons for this change of prey is the fact that stray dogs are easier to catch than the swift-moving deer. Also, stray dogs are extremely plentiful in the area around Powai. There are many poverty-stricken slums on the edges of the **well-heeled** suburb and mongrel dogs **abound** there. They raid the rubbish bins of the poor and rich alike and are easy targets for the leopards.

But why would leopards suddenly want to **assuage** their hunger at the expense of human beings, rather than the stray dogs? One naturalist has suggested that it is all a terrible mistake, that the leopards are mistaking human children for stray dogs on their nocturnal raids because they are about the same size. The fact that most of the humans who have been killed have been children, and the fact that the leopards usually do not actually eat their human prey, **add credence to** this school of thought.

It has been suggested that human beings might have, **unwittingly**, brought the leopards closer to their homes. Over the last 15 years or so, human settlements have encroached more and more on the jungle area of the National Park which is home to the leopards. Inevitably, this has meant that leopards can easily encroach on human settlements.

Only a few of the leopards attack humans, but the rest seem remarkably **unfazed** by the presence of humans. Security guards have been equipped with fireworks to try and scare off the leopards, but they are beginning to ignore these. Not surprisingly, the residential and shopping areas of Powai are now ghost towns at night.

abound

This is a formal word meaning to exist in large quantities or numbers:

- *Drug addicts **abound** in the area around the railway station.*
- *There are **a great many** drug addicts in the area around the railway station.*

assuage

When applied to hunger, thirst or desire, **assuage** is a formal word meaning to **satisfy**:

- *The climber had some chocolate left in his backpack, but it was not nearly enough to **assuage** his hunger.*
- *The climber had some chocolate left in his backpack, but it was not nearly enough to **satisfy** his hunger.*

Language Help

The word assuage can also be used, in a formal context, to mean to make something bad or unpleasant less severe:

- *This drug should assuage the pain.*

berth, give someone or something a wide berth

This is an idiom which has become a cliché. It means not to go near someone or something. The cliché can be replaced by an expression such as **keep away from** or **avoid**:

- *I **give** the shopping mall **a wide berth** on Saturdays. It's always too busy.*
- *I **avoid** the shopping mall on Saturdays. It's always too busy.*

Language Help

In origin, the expression refers to giving a ship plenty of room to manoeuvre safely.

credence, add credence to

This is a formal expression which means to make something more believable. It is rather a pompous expression and it can easily be reworded using a word such as **believable, likely, acceptable, plausible**, etc:

- *Local historians were of the opinion that the area was the site of an ancient Roman camp and some of the objects found **added credence to** their theory.*
- *Local historians were of the opinion that the area was the site of an ancient Roman camp and some of the objects found **made** their theory **more likely**.*
- *Local historians were of the opinion that the area was the site of an ancient Roman camp and some of the objects found **made** their theory **more plausible**.*

metamorphosis

This is a formal word meaning a complete change. It can be replaced by a simpler word such as **change, alteration** or **difference**, or by the word **transformation**:

- *I hadn't seen Mary since she was about 13 years old and I couldn't believe what a **metamorphosis** had taken place.*
- *I hadn't seen Mary since she was about 13 years old and I couldn't believe what a **great change** had taken place.*
- *I hadn't seen Mary since she was about 13 years old and I couldn't believe what a **transformation** had taken place.*

surmise

This is a formal word meaning to believe something to be the case without definite proof. It can be replaced by a simpler word such as **guess** or **suppose**:

- *Police **surmised** that Jack had had something to do with his wife's death, but no evidence ever came to light.*
- *Police **guessed** that Jack had had something to do with his wife's death, but no evidence ever came to light.*

unfazed

This is an informal expression indicating that someone is not at all concerned about something, especially something unexpected. The expression can be replaced by **unworried, unconcerned, untroubled, not bothered** or **not disturbed**:

- *There was a lot of media interest when the teenager won the pop song competition, but she was completely **unfazed** by all the attention.*

- *There was a lot of media interest when the teenager won the pop song competition, but she was completely* ***untroubled*** *by all the attention.*
- *There was a lot of media interest when the teenager won the pop song competition, but she was not at all* ***bothered*** *by all the attention.*

unwittingly

In the context of the passage, **unwittingly** is a formal expression meaning without intending to do something. The word can be replaced by a simpler expression such as **unintentionally, accidentally** or **without meaning to**:

- *Jane* ***unwittingly*** *upset Jill by asking where Jane's husband, Bill, was. Jane had not realized that Bill had left Jill.*
- *Jane* ***unintentionally*** *upset Jill by asking where Jane's husband, Bill, was. Jane had not realized that Bill had left Jill.*
- *Jane upset Jill* ***without meaning to*** *by asking where Jane's husband, Bill, was. Jane had not realized that Bill had left Jill.*

well-heeled

This is an informal word meaning rich. It can be replaced by a word from standard language such as **rich, wealthy, well-off, affluent** or **prosperous**:

- *I first knew Peter when he was a wild student, but now he's a respectable,* ***well-heeled*** *lawyer.*
- *I first knew Peter when he was a wild student, but now he's a respectable,* ***wealthy*** *lawyer.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *Furthermore, these big cats have an instinctive fear of human beings and usually* ***give*** *them* ***a wide berth.***

_____

_____

2. *Naturalists are puzzled and concerned at this* ***metamorphosis*** *in the behaviour of leopards.*

_____

_____

3. *It is* ***surmised*** *that one of the reasons for this change of prey is the fact that stray dogs are easier to catch than the swift-moving deer.*

_____

_____

4. *The fact that most of the humans who have been killed have been children, and the fact that the leopards usually do not actually eat their human prey,* ***add credence to*** *this school of thought.*

_____

_____

_____

5. *Only a few of the leopards attack humans, but the rest seem remarkably* ***unfazed*** *by the presence of humans.*

_____

_____

B Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *All the crew were killed when the boat was caught up in a* _____ *and capsized.* (**vertex / vortex**)
2. *Be* _____ *. There are pickpockets operating in this area.* (**vigilant / vigilante**)
3. *Jane received a beautiful* _____ *of roses on her birthday.* (**bookie / bouquet**)
4. *The* _____ *journey took longer than the return one because the train was late.* (**outward / outwards**)
5. *The accused was refused* _____ *.* (**bail / bale**)

C Replace the expressions in bold in the following sentences with simpler words or expressions.

1. *Mary and Will had a noisy quarrel at their wedding reception and some of us feared that this was* ***the shape of things to come.***

_____

_____

2. *Why* ***is it always yours truly*** *that is left to do the washing-up?*

_____

3. *Jim is accusing the firm of unfair dismissal, but he* ***doesn't have a leg to stand on.*** *He was sacked for incompetence after he had been given three written warnings.*

_____

_____

4. *I haven't seen John* ***in a month of Sundays,*** *but he phoned me last night.*

_____

_____

5. ***My heart was in my mouth*** *as I watched my son walk along the roof to rescue the cat.*

_____

_____

Metaphors

A **simile** is a figure of speech in which we say that one thing is like another in one particular aspect:

*Her hair was **like silk.***
*Her hair was smooth **as silk.***

A **metaphor**, however, is a figure of speech in which one thing is stated to be another because there is a point of resemblance between the two things compared:

*The soldier was **a lion** in the fight.*

This means that the soldier was very brave because the lion is noted for its fearlessness. The comparison is implicit, not introduced by "like" or "as", like the simile.

Another example of a metaphor is referring to a camel as **the ship of the desert** because the camel is seen as the best way of crossing the desert, just as the ship is the best way of crossing the sea.

Exercise 2

Each of the following sentences contains a metaphor. Underline and explain it.

1. *Jane was mild as milk most of the time, but she was a tiger when it came to defending her children.*

_____

_____

2. *It had been very cold all night and, at dawn, the fields were sparkling with icy diamonds.*

_____

_____

3. *Amy made all the rest of us feel ugly. She was a pearl among pebbles.*

4. *After her children left home, a shroud of melancholy fell on Lucy and she eventually committed suicide.*

5. *Bob's first wife was unfaithful and now his second wife was wielding the knife of betrayal.*

6. *Jill wanted to run away, but her feet had become blocks of lead.*

7. *His youngest daughter was the brightest jewel in the crown of the emperor.*

8. *Jane said she would love Mike forever, but the flames of love were extinguished within two weeks.*

9. *For months after her bereavement Meg was in a state of deep depression, but eventually she began to see the light at the end of the tunnel.*

10. *Jim had been a teacher for many years, but university lecturing was an uncharted sea to him.*

Unit 22

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

A letter of complaint

Dear Mr Black

I must begin this letter by apologizing for addressing it to your home. I know that you are currently enjoying what I am sure is a well-deserved retirement. Writing to you at home is **a mark of** my concern for how your business is currently being run. My assumption is that, if I had addressed the letter to your business, it would have been **binned** and you would have never known anything about it.

About a month ago, I bought a pair of extremely expensive designer shoes at your **retail outlet** in the High Street. I am sure that I could have purchased them at a cheaper price if I had followed the example of **the common herd** and had bought the shoes at one of the chain stores.

However, it is my view that, if we lose the privately-owned stores from the centre of the town, then we lose its individuality. It becomes like most of the other town centres throughout the land—soulless.

It is because of this view that I have always **patronized** the privately-owned shops. It is my opinion that shops which are still in family hands generally provide a better class of goods and a better class of service. On the basis of my recent experience in your local shop, my view is **based on a false premise.**

I wore the **aforementioned** designer shoes to a formal dinner at the town hall. It was my privilege to represent my dear, late husband who was the ex-mayor of this town. I left the event early and tried to get a taxi. It was raining heavily and I had to wait for a considerable time. When I got home the shoes were ruined, like **sopping** bits of cardboard.

I took them to your shop the next day and was met by an extremely rude young woman who mumbled something I couldn't understand. I, eventually, realized that she was accusing me of having subjected the shoes to **undue** wear. **I couldn't believe my ears**!

I was refused a refund of my money, a voucher for another pair of shoes, or even a replacement pair of identical shoes. In the end, I gave up and decided to write to you in the hope that you still value loyal customers.

I look forward to hearing your views on the matter.

Yours sincerely

Eleanor Thomson

aforementioned

This is a formal word used to describe something that has been mentioned before in the same piece of writing or speech. It can be rather a pompous expression, although it is sometimes used humorously. It is sometimes a redundant word because it is quite obvious that whatever is being referred to has been mentioned already. In such a case you can simply omit the word:

- *We found the purse on the street and looked inside for the name of the owner. We then returned the* ***aforementioned*** *purse to the grateful owner.*
- *We found the purse on the street and looked inside for the name of the owner. We then returned it to the grateful owner.*

Language Help

If the thing referred to is quite a lot farther back in the piece of writing, you can either omit the expression, if it is still clear what is being referred to, or reword the sentence:

- *The* ***aforementioned*** *incident had a devastating effect on the lives of the younger children.*
- *That incident had a devastating effect on the lives of the younger children.*
- *The incident which I described earlier had a devastating effect on the lives of the younger children.*

bin

This is an informal expression which means to throw away. It literally means to put in a bin, bin being a waste bin or wastepaper basket. The word can be replaced by an expression such as **throw away, throw out** or **dispose of**:

- *I keep getting letters offering me new credit cards, but I always* ***bin*** *the lot.*
- *I keep getting letters offering me new credit cards, but I always* ***throw*** *the lot* ***away****.*

ear, I couldn't believe my ears

This is a cliché which is used to indicate that what you have heard has caused you to be very surprised. The cliché can be avoided by using an expression which emphasizes the extent of your surprise, such as **be astonished, be astounded, be amazed**, etc:

- ***I couldn't believe my ears*** *when Anne told the boss that the error was my fault. The mistake was hers.*
- ***I was astounded*** *when Anne told the boss that the error was my fault. The mistake was hers.*

herd, the common herd

This is a cliché used in a derogatory way, or sometimes used in a humorous way, which refers to ordinary people. The cliché can be avoided by the use of the expression **ordinary people** or **common people**:

- *Sara always buys her clothes in designer boutiques. She would never think of shopping with* ***the common herd*** *in department stores.*
- *Sara always buys her clothes in designer boutiques. She would never think of shopping with* ***ordinary people*** *in department stores.*

mark, a mark of

This is a formal expression which means to indicate. It can be replaced by a less formal expression such as **an indication of, a demonstration of**, or **a sign of**. Alternatively, you can reword the sentence, using a verb such as **indicate** or **demonstrate**:

- *It was* ***a mark of*** *Jim's love for Liz that he tried to protect her from the reality of their difficult financial situation.*
- *It was* ***an indication of*** *Jim's love for Liz that he tried to protect her from the reality of their difficult financial situation.*
- *The fact that Jim tried to protect Liz from the reality of their difficult financial situation* ***demonstrated*** *his love for her.*

outlet, retail outlet

This is a formal or technical expression meaning a place where goods are sold. It can be replaced by the simpler word **shop**:

- *The new complex being built on the edge of town will contain several* ***retail outlets*** *as well as a hotel and offices.*
- *The new complex being built on the edge of town will contain several* ***shops*** *as well as a hotel and offices.*

patronize

In the context of the passage, **patronize** is a formal word meaning to be a regular customer or client of. You can replace it with either of these expressions or with a phrase such as **shop at**:

- *Hardly any of the people who have holiday homes here **patronize** the local shops.*
- *Hardly any of the people who have holiday homes here **shop at** the local shops.*
- *I get my hair cut by a local hairdresser, but Pam **patronizes** an exclusive city salon.*
- *I get my hair cut by a local hairdresser, but Pam is **a client of** an exclusive city salon.*

premise, based on a false premise

This is a formal expression which indicates that something is wrong. It is often used in rather a pompous way and it can be replaced by a simpler expression using a word such as **wrong**, **incorrect** or **inaccurate**:

- *I have to tell you that your conclusion is **based on a false premise**.*
- *I have to tell you that your conclusion is **incorrect**.*

sopping

This is an informal word meaning very wet. You can replace it with an expression such as **extremely wet**, **soaking wet**, **sodden** or **drenched**:

- *There is a leak in the bedroom roof and our bedclothes are **sopping**.*
- *There is a leak in the bedroom roof and our bedclothes are **sodden**.*

undue

This is a formal word meaning more than is considered necessary. It can be replaced by a simpler word such as **unnecessary**, **unreasonable** or **unacceptable**:

- *The public must be made aware of the potential terrorist threat, but we do not wish to cause **undue** widespread alarm.*
- *The public must be made aware of the potential terrorist threat, but we do not wish to cause **unnecessary** widespread alarm.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *Writing to you at home is **a mark of** my concern for how your business is currently being run.*

_____

_____

2. *About a month ago, I bought a pair of extremely expensive designer shoes at your **retail outlet** in the High Street.*

_____

_____

3. *I am sure that I could have purchased them at a cheaper price if I had followed the example of **the common herd** and had bought the shoes at one of the chain stores.*

_____

_____

4. *It is because of this view that I have always **patronized** the privately-owned shops.*

_____

5. *On the basis of my recent experience in your local shop, my view is* ***based on a false premise.***

_____

_____

B Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *We walked round the* _____ *of the lake. (* ***parameter / perimeter*** *)*
2. *The union leaders have decided to* _____ *their members about a possible strike. (* ***ballet / ballot*** *)*
3. *There is a* _____ *roll of paper in the computer printer. (* ***continual / continuous*** *)*
4. *They are in favour of a* _____ *to traditional methods of farming. (* ***reversal / reversion*** *)*
5. *Tom loves life in the country, but Lucy is still* _____ *about it. (* ***ambiguous / ambivalent*** *)*

C Tick the idiom that is similar in meaning to the phrase in bold in each sentence.

1. *Whenever Dad meets one of my boyfriends for the first time, he* ***asks him a lot of questions*** *about himself and his background.*
   - *a. read someone the riot act* ☐
   - *b. give someone the third degree* ☐
   - *c. beg the question* ☐
   - *d. plumb the depths of someone* ☐
2. *Our team* ***keep being successful*** *at the moment. We haven't lost a match for several weeks.*
   - *a. keep the wolf from the door* ☐
   - *b. come up in the world* ☐
   - *c. be on a roll* ☐
   - *d. be on a sticky wicket* ☐
3. *Bob* ***puzzled over*** *the problem for days, but failed to find a solution.*
   - *a. blow a fuse* ☐
   - *b. press the right button* ☐
   - *c. scratch your head over* ☐
   - *d. get to the bottom of* ☐
4. *The teenager* ***determinedly opposed*** *all his parents' recommendations.*
   - *a. set your face against* ☐
   - *b. make a clean sweep of* ☐
   - *c. be at odds with* ☐
   - *d. not give house room to* ☐
5. *Jack only realized that the boy* ***had tricked*** *him when he discovered that his wallet was missing.*
   - *a. put the mockers on someone* ☐
   - *b. get one up on someone* ☐
   - *c. let someone have it* ☐
   - *d. pull a fast one on someone* ☐

"-ish"

The suffix **-ish** is used to form adjectives from nouns and also adjectives from other adjectives. The suffix conveys three different meanings:

1 One set of adjectives ending in **-ish**, and formed from nouns, refers to nationality, as **Irish** and **Swedish**, or, sometimes, to a religious or other group, as **Jewish**.

2 Another set of adjectives ending in **-ish**, and also formed from nouns, indicates qualities or characteristics, as **boyish**. Most of these adjectives are derogatory, as **childish** and **selfish**.

3 Another set of adjectives ending in **-ish**, but formed from adjectives, suggests some quality that is approximately like that of the adjective, as **oldish** and **longish**.

Exercise 2

Fill in each blank with an adjective formed from the word in bold and ending in *-ish*.

1. *The thief was a _____ woman with long dark hair. (**young**)*
2. *The baby likes her milk _____, but not too hot. (**warm**)*
3. *It was a _____ day and we were all wearing scarves and gloves. (**cold**)*
4. *This is a _____ dish made with lamb. (**from Turkey**)*
5. *Jane's husband is _____. (**around fifty**)*
6. *John likes to go to parties and have some fun, but his sister is rather _____. (**book**)*
7. *The girl had a _____ face, but she had a very attractive personality. (**plain**)*
8. *The young man sang some _____ folk songs. (**from Poland**)*
9. *It was _____ of Bill to be so unkind to the girl who was only trying to help. (**boor**)*
10. *The soup had a peculiar, _____ taste. (**sweet**)*

Unit 23

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

School trip journal

We had to catch a very early flight to Copenhagen and most of us were still **yawning our heads off.** I thought that I would get another hour's **zizz** on the plane, but no such luck!

I was sitting next to Pete Jackson, who is terrified about flying. Fortunately, he'd been given a mild sedative to calm him down because this was one of the bumpiest flights I've ever been on. It was a real **white-knuckle** journey. I could hear someone behind me **puking** and I thought that I was going to **throw up**, too. I managed not to, but I couldn't face eating anything.

There kept being announcements about gale-force winds and turbulence. We had to keep our seat belts fastened the whole time and the cabin staff kept having to sit down and put their seat belts on. Whenever they did stand up, they lurched about unsteadily.

When we arrived at Copenhagen airport, we took the train into the Central Station. It only took about 15 minutes and our hostel was only about 10 minutes' walk from the station. We soon checked in and **got shot of** our heavy backpacks. We were ready to see the sights of Copenhagen!

Our hostel was **a stone's throw** from the City Hall Square, called Radhuspladsen. Our English teacher pointed out the statue of Hans Christian Andersen outside the City Hall. I used to love it when my Mum read his stories to me when I was a child, but Pete Jackson said, "Who's he?" He's such a **dolt**!

The Radhuspladsen is very close to Tivoli gardens, the world-famous amusement park. We'd been told that it had a lot of exciting rides and interesting restaurants. The teachers said we were going to go there as a group one evening later in the week and that we were to stay away from it until then. Apparently, it's all too easy to **spend money like water** there.

Various excursions were planned for the rest of the week, but we had been given the rest of that day free to have a look around and get our bearings. We walked down the street known as Strøget, which has no cars, but which is **heaving with** people. Everywhere there seemed to be open-air cafés and restaurants and cobbled squares with all kinds of street performers. It was all too much for some of us after the early flight. We went back to the hotel to **get our heads down** for a while.

Vocabulary Study

dolt

This is an informal word meaning a stupid or foolish person. It can be replaced by an expression such as **fool** or **idiot**:

- *You were a **dolt** to spend all that money on CDs for the party. You could easily have borrowed some and now you don't have enough money to live on for the rest of the week.*
- *You were a **fool** to spend all that money on CDs for the party. You could easily have borrowed some and now you don't have enough money to live on for the rest of the week.*

head, get your head down

This is an informal expression referring to someone sleeping or resting. It can be replaced by an expression such as **get some sleep, have a nap** or **have a rest**:

- *My plane leaves at about 3 am and I need to **get my head down** for a few hours before then.*
- *My plane leaves at about 3 am and I need to **get some sleep** for a few hours before then.*

head, yawn your head off

This is a cliché, used in informal contexts, meaning to yawn a great deal. The cliché can easily be avoided by using an expression such as **yawn a lot** or **yawn a great deal**:

- *Bob's been **yawning his head off** all morning. Apparently, he went clubbing until the early hours of the morning.*
- *Bob's been **yawning a lot** all morning. Apparently, he went clubbing until the early hours of the morning.*

heave, heaving (with)

This is an informal expression meaning to be full of. It can be replaced with an expression such as **full (of)** or **crowded (with)** or **packed (with)**:

- *It's the last shopping day before Christmas and the shops are **heaving**.*
- *It's the last shopping day before Christmas and the shops are **very crowded**.*
- *It was a hot day and the beach was **heaving with** sunbathers.*
- *It was a hot day and the beach was **packed with** sunbathers.*

puke

This is an informal word meaning to vomit. It can be replaced by a word such as **vomit** or the expression **be sick**:

- *There was a drunk **puking** in the gutter outside the street.*
- *There was a drunk **being sick** in the gutter outside the street.*

LanguagceHelp

The expression **throw up** (*below*) has the same meaning.

shot, get shot of

This is an informal expression meaning to get rid of. It can be replaced by an expression such as **get rid of, dispose of** or **discard**, depending on the context:

- *The boss said that his new secretary is very inefficient and he's going to **get shot of** her right away.*
- *The boss said that his new secretary is very inefficient and he's going to **get rid of** her right away.*

stone, a stone's throw

This is a cliché meaning to be very near to something in terms of space. You can easily avoid the cliché by using the word **near** or **close** or by using the expression **within easy reach of**:

- *We went swimming every day as our holiday apartment was only **a stone's throw** from the sea.*
- *We went swimming every day as our holiday apartment was **within easy reach of** the sea.*

throw, throw up

This is an informal expression meaning to vomit. It can be replaced by a word such as **vomit** or **be sick**:

- *The sight of the rotting flesh made me **throw up**.*
- *The sight of the rotting flesh made me **vomit**.*

Language Help

The word **puke** (*above*) has the same meaning.

water, spend money like water

This is a cliché, used in informal contexts, meaning to spend a great deal of money. It can be replaced with **spend a lot of money** or **spend money recklessly** or by using the word **extravagant**:

- *No wonder Meg has a lot of debts. She **spends money like water**.*
- *No wonder Meg has a lot of debts. She is **very extravagant**.*
- *No wonder Meg has a lot of debts. She **spends money recklessly**.*

white-knuckle

This is a cliché, used in informal contexts, meaning very frightening. It can be replaced by a word such as **terrifying** or **petrifying**:

- *Climbing down the mountain in the mist was a **white-knuckle** experience for the inexperienced climber.*
- *Climbing down the mountain in the mist was a **terrifying** experience for the inexperienced climber.*

Language Help

In origin, the expression refers to a **white-knuckle ride**, a very frightening fairground ride, such as one on a roller coaster. The knuckles of people holding on extremely tightly in such a ride go white.

zizz

This is an informal word meaning **a short sleep** and it can easily be replaced by this or by the word **nap**. Like sleep, **zizz** can also be a verb:

- *The party's going to go on until very late and I'm going to try to get some **zizz** before I go to it.*
- *The party's going to go on until very late and I'm going to try to get **a nap** before I go to it.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *We had to catch a very early flight to Copenhagen and most of us were still **yawning our heads off**.*

_____

_____

2. *It was a real **white-knuckle** journey.*

_____

3. *Our hostel was **a stone's throw** from the City Hall Square.*

_____

4. *Apparently, it's all too easy to **spend money like water** there.*

_____

5. *We went back to the hotel to **get our heads down** for a while.*

_____

B Complete each simile with an appropriate word.

1. *The child was **as happy as a pig in** _____ on the beach.*
2. *After their holiday in the sun the little girl was **as brown as a** _____.*

3. *When he first started to learn to swim, the boy was* ***as keen as*** _____*, but he gradually lost enthusiasm.*
4. *If you're going to wait for Anne to get ready for the party, you'll have to be* ***as patient as*** _____ *because she usually takes several hours.*
5. *When they left the party, Ben was as* ***drunk as a*** _____ *and his friends had to take him home.*

C Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *There was a strong* _____ *of European countries which voted against the proposal.* ***(bloc / block)***
2. *The children's guardian was charged with child* _____ *.* ***(abuse / misuse)***
3. *The burglar succeeded in entering the house without* _____ *the alarm system.* ***(activating / actuating)***
4. *Our MP is one of the most* _____ *of this generation of politicians.* ***(notable / noticeable)***
5. *Payment must be made by bank* _____ *.* ***(draft / draught)***

Phobias

A **phobia** is an abnormal or irrational fear of something, as *Meg screamed when the robin flew in the window, because she has a* ***phobia*** *about birds.* Many words are formed with **-phobia** as a suffix to refer to various specified fears. They are commonly used in psychiatry and related fields, and some are quite well known in the general language, as **claustrophobia**, fear of enclosed spaces, and **hydrophobia**, fear of water.

The following are examples of phobias:

agoraphobia, fear of open spaces or public spaces
neophobia, fear of novelty or new things
xenophobia, fear of foreigners or strangers

The adjectival suffix **-phobic** is used to describe someone who is suffering from such a fear, while nouns ending in the suffix **-phobe** refer to someone affected by such a fear.

Exercise 2

Write down the meaning of each word in bold in the following sentences.

1. *You get a beautiful view of the city from the top of the tower, but Amy won't be able to admire it. She's* ***acrophobic.***

   _____

2. *There's no point in trying to persuade Dave to computerize his production system. He's a* ***technophobe.***

   _____

3. *We're thinking of getting a pet, but it'll have to be a cat. Tom suffers from* ***cynophobia.***

   _____

4. *Pam never switches off any of the lights in her house at night. She has a bad case of* ***nyctophobia.***

   _____

5. *I'll go swimming with you, but I'm not taking a diving course. I suffer from* ***bathophobia.***

   _____

6. *Lucy won't live in that house. Have you seen what number it is? She has* ***triskaidekaphobia.***

   _____

7. *We can visit the snake house, but we'll have to miss out the aquarium. Bob suffers from* ***icthyophobia.***

   _____

8. *Most people don't mind the pigeons in the town square, but Mary has* ***ornithophobia.***

   _____

9. *It looks as though Fred will remain a bachelor for life. I think that he's* ***gamophobic.***

   _____

10. *I can't believe that either Jane or Anna will ever become a doctor. Jane has* ***haemophobia*** *and Anna has* ***necrophobia.***

    _____

Unit 24

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

Outrage at pop concert

A row has broken out in the usually peaceful town of Ramsay. The owner of one of the local estates has enraged some local residents by giving his consent to a pop concert being held in his grounds on the last weekend in July. The situation has been **exacerbated** by the fact that the estate owner only bought the property about a year ago. To **add fuel to the flames**, he is an ex-pop singer, Bob Kramer, the former lead singer with the group known as The Where.

Many local residents are making their feelings known **in no uncertain terms.** "We're totally against the idea of this pop concert," said long-term resident Colonel Grant. "We're tired of people moving into the area and **riding roughshod over** the wishes of the local people. They **don't give a hoot** for the traditions and customs of the area and they contribute very little to the local economy. They drive down at the weekend with their four-by-fours crammed with goods bought in the city. Yet, our local shops are in constant danger of **going to the wall.** If they want to come here, they should contribute something to the area."

Mrs Knox-Smith agreed with the colonel. "This Kramer man ought not to be allowed to hold this pop concert here. We don't want to have our town disturbed by all these **weirdos**. Nor do we want all the litter they'll leave behind. It's a disgrace that the idea is even being considered."

"No respectable young people will go to it," said Mr Lewis, a local farmer. "There'll be a lot of **yobbos** and **druggies** here and the crime rate will go up. I hope we're going to have a lot of extra police here. But who's going to pay for that?"

Mr Kramer was not available for comment when we tried to contact him, but his press officer said, "We think that the pop concert will be an excellent thing for the area. This is a sleepy area, with a lot of retired people, and there's not much for the local young people to do. Most of them are really looking forward to the event. It will **drag** the town **into the twenty-first century** and that's a good thing for the young. It will give a real boost to the economy of the area, too."

Obviously, we have not heard the last of this disagreement.

century, drag someone or something into the twenty-first century

This is a cliché meaning to try to make someone or something more modern. The cliché can be avoided by the use of an expression such as **bring up to date, modernize, make modern**, etc:

- *Bill would like to **drag** his father's business **into the twenty-first century** by computerizing the production system, but his father absolutely refused to agree.*
- *Bill would like to **bring** his father's business **up to date** by computerizing the production system, but his father absolutely refused to agree.*
- *Bill would like to **modernize** his father's business by computerizing the production system, but his father absolutely refused to agree.*

Language Help

Sometimes the word **screaming** is added to the cliché, as **drag someone screaming into the twenty-first century**, to emphasize that the person referred to is unwilling to become more modern.

druggie

This is an informal expression meaning drug addict. It can be replaced by an expression such as **drug addict** or **drug user**:

- *Jane is very unsympathetic towards homeless people and says that most of them are **druggies**.*
- *Jane is very unsympathetic towards homeless people and says that most of them are **drug addicts**.*

Language Help

Another common informal word for **druggie** is **junkie**.

exacerbate

This is a formal word meaning to make worse. It can be replaced with a simpler expression such as **worsen, make worse** or **aggravate**:

- *Tom's attempts to help only **exacerbated** Lucy's problems.*
- *Tom's attempts to help only **made** Lucy's problems **worse**.*
- *Tom's attempts to help only **aggravated** Lucy's problems.*

Language Help

The expression **add fuel to the flames** *(below)* has a similar meaning.

fuel, add fuel to the flames

This is a cliché meaning to make a situation worse. The cliché can be avoided by using an expression such as **worsen the situation, make the situation worse** or **aggravate the situation**:

- *Jim and Amy were having marriage problems and Bill **added fuel to the flames** by telling Jim that he had seen Amy having a drink with another man.*
- *Jim and Amy were having marriage problems and Bill **made the situation worse** by telling Jim that he had seen Amy having a drink with another man.*

Language Help

The formal word **exacerbate** *(above)* has a similar meaning.

hoot, not give a hoot

If you say that **you don't give a hoot**, it means that you don't care at all. The colloquialism can be replaced by an expression such as **not care**, or **not be at all concerned**:

- *All of Sara's neighbours are gossiping about her behaviour, but she says that she **doesn't give a hoot**.*
- *All of Sara's neighbours are gossiping about her behaviour, but she says that she **doesn't care at all**.*

ride, ride roughshod over

If you **ride roughshod over** someone, you completely ignore their opinions, feelings or rights. It is an idiom which has become a cliché and it can be avoided by using an expression such as **ignore, pay no attention to** or **take no notice of**:

- *We really shouldn't have elected Sara as chairperson of the protest committee. She **rides roughshod over** all the other members.*

- *We really shouldn't have elected Sara as chairperson of the protest committee. She* ***pays no attention to*** *any of the other members.*

uncertain, in no uncertain terms

This is a cliché which is used to indicate that someone is speaking plainly rather than being tactful, diplomatic or subtle. The cliché can be replaced by a word such as **frankly, bluntly, plainly** or **candidly**:

- *Peter was hoping that Lucy would agree to be friends with him again, but she told him* ***in no uncertain terms*** *that she never wanted to see him again.*
- *Peter was hoping that Lucy would agree to be friends with him again, but she told him* ***bluntly*** *that she never wanted to see him again.*

wall, go to the wall

This is an idiom meaning to suffer financial failure. It can be replaced by an expression such as **fail, collapse, be ruined** or **become bankrupt**, according to the context:

- *During the recession, the owners of many small businesses* ***went to the wall.***
- *During the recession, the owners of many small businesses* ***went bankrupt.***
- *A new supermarket opened and Jack's small grocery business* ***went to the wall.***
- *A new supermarket opened and Jack's small grocery business* ***collapsed.***

weirdo

This is an informal word, used in a derogatory context, meaning a person who behaves strangely or who looks strange. You can replace it with a word such as **eccentric, strange, odd** or **weird**:

- *Some of Jim's friends think that his new girlfriend is a* ***weirdo*** *just because she doesn't eat meat or dairy products and uses herbal remedies.*
- *Some of Jim's friends think that his new girlfriend is very* ***odd*** *just because she doesn't eat meat or dairy products and uses herbal remedies.*
- *Some of Jim's friends think that his new girlfriend is* ***an eccentric*** *just because she doesn't eat meat or dairy products and uses herbal remedies.*

yobbo

This is an informal word used to describe a young man who you think is badly behaved, rude and, often, aggressive and violent. It can be replaced by the word **lout**:

- *A lot of* ***yobbos*** *hang around the town centre at night and many older people are scared to go there.*
- *A lot of* ***louts*** *hang around the town centre at night and many older people are scared to go there.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *The situation has been* ***exacerbated*** *by the fact that the estate owner only bought the property about a year ago.*

_____

_____

2. *To* ***add fuel to the flames,*** *he is an ex-pop singer, Bob Kramer, the former lead singer with the group known as The Where.*

_____

_____

3. *Many local residents are making their feelings known* ***in no uncertain terms.***

_____

4. *We're tired of people moving into the area and* ***riding roughshod over*** *the wishes of the local people.*

_____

_____

5. *It will* ***drag*** *the town* ***into the twenty-first century*** *and that's a good thing for the young.*

_____

_____

B Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *The writing on this old letter is too* _____ *to read. (* ***faint / feint*** *)*
2. *Jack is of* _____ *character and I certainly wouldn't employ him. (* ***doubtful / dubious*** *)*
3. *The detective said that it was one of the most* _____ *crime scenes that he had ever seen. (* ***grisly / gristly*** *)*
4. *The early ships had wooden* _____ *. (* ***hulks / hulls*** *)*
5. *The old woman was* _____ *into giving all her savings to the con man. (* ***inveighed / inveigled*** *)*

C Rewrite the following sentences, replacing the colloquial or slang words or expressions with standard words or expressions.

1. *Bob made* ***a packet*** *on the stock market when he was still a young man.*

_____

2. *Jim has been showing off his* ***pecs*** *ever since he started going to the gym.*

_____

3. *Joe had saved quite a lot of money for his holiday, but he's just lost it all on the* ***gee-gees.***

_____

4. *Dad said that all of us had to attend the party that he was holding for the neighbours, but my brother, who hadn't wanted to go to it, managed to* ***slope off*** *not long after the start.*

_____

_____

5. *It sometimes takes only one student* ***with attitude*** *to disrupt the work of a whole class.*

_____

"hyper-" and "hypo-"

The prefixes **hyper-** and **hypo-** are liable to be confused because they sound rather alike. Yet, they mean the opposite. **Hyper-** means above, beyond or excessively, as in **hyperactive**, meaning excessively active. **Hypo-** means below, under, below normal, as in **hypothermia**, meaning the condition of having a very low body temperature, often dangerously so.

Exercise 2

Replace each of the phrases in bold with an expression that contains an appropriate word beginning with *hyper-* or *hypo-*.

1. *The play is probably not as bad as Ben says it is. He's* ***far too critical.***

   _____

2. *The doctor has told Mary that she is* ***suffering from abnormally low blood pressure.***

   _____

3. *The nurse administered the drug with a* ***syringe that injects a drug below the skin.***

   _____

4. *Tom goes to the doctor a lot, not because he's ill, but because he is a* ***person who worries excessively about his health.***

   _____

   _____

5. *Mary was filled with panic and started to* ***breathe at an abnormally fast rate.***

   _____

6. *In cold winters the number of old people dying of* ***the condition of having a very low body temperature*** *is increasing greatly.*

   _____

   _____

7. *You shouldn't worry about upsetting Lucy. She's* ***abnormally sensitive.***

_____

8. *Once a month I go to the* ***large supermarket*** *on the edge of town to do my household shopping.*

_____

_____

9. *Pam suffers from* ***an excess of acid*** *in her stomach.*

_____

10. *When Frank had a stroke, it was discovered that he had* ***abnormally high blood pressure.***

_____

_____

Unit 25

Reading Text

Read this passage, paying particular attention to the words and expressions in bold. Look up their meanings and usage in the next section, Vocabulary Study.

Retirement problems

Many governments are becoming increasingly uneasy about the imbalance which is being created between the number of retired people in their communities and the number of people of working age. Experts in **demographic** statistics indicate that the problem is set to get worse in many developed countries. They foresee that the birth rate will continue to fall and that more and more people will live to an old age.

Governments are faced with the problem of how to **foot the bill** incurred by the increase in life expectancy. Obviously, those still in work can be asked to **shell out** more in taxes, but they already have **multifarious** outlets for their money. There are the usual financial demands of children and, perhaps, of elderly parents, and people have become used to more lavish lifestyles nowadays.

Workers, also, have to provide for their own retirement. State pensions are causing serious **fiscal** problems because of the declining size of the workforce and private pensions are suffering because of **wobbly** stock markets. People are being urged to put a significant proportion of their salaries aside for the needs of old age. But how is this to be done, especially if they are also required to pay increased taxes? Many of them think that the principle of **saving** money **for a rainy day** is all very well, but they have to **keep body and soul together** in the meantime.

So what is to be done? Governments worldwide are **putting their thinking caps on**. Some are considering raising the official retirement age, currently 65 in many countries. But what age should this be? Some governments are suggesting that the retirement age should be 70 because people are now remaining healthier longer, and thus able to work longer. They also argue that working lives of many people are now shorter than those of workers in former generations. This is because more people are now going into higher education and are not joining the labour force till later in their lives.

Opponents of this suggestion argue that the ageing process is known to be very variable. Some people do, indeed, live long and healthy lives, but many people live long lives which are far from healthy. Many are **incapacitated** long before they are 70.

Even if people are able to work until they're 70, what job will they do? Will they be allowed to keep on at their old jobs or will they be expected to make way for the whizz kids of the next generation? Will later retirement simply bring demotion and humiliation?

bill, foot the bill

This expression is used in informal contexts to mean to pay the cost of something and can be replaced by the word **pay**:

- *It was you who broke the table and so you can **foot the bill** to have it repaired.*
- *It was you who broke the table and so you can **pay** to have it repaired.*
- *Jim had to **foot the bill** for his daughter's wedding and he is now seriously in debt.*
- *Jim had to **pay** for his daughter's wedding and he is now seriously in debt.*

body, keep body and soul together

This is a cliché, used in informal or humorous contexts, to mean to be able to live, usually by earning enough to provide the basics of living. You can replace the cliché with an expression such as **earn a living, make a living, support yourself, survive**, etc:

- *Liz says that she hates her job and that she goes on doing it just to **keep body and soul together**.*
- *Liz says that she hates her job and that she goes on doing it just to **make a living**.*

cap, put your thinking cap on

This is an idiom which has become a cliché. It means to spend some time thinking about something. The cliché can be replaced by an expression such as **think about something, think something over** or **give some thought to**:

- *"Do you have any idea what Dad would like for a birthday present?"*
  *"No, but I'll **put my thinking cap on**, if you like."*
- *"Do you have any idea what Dad would like for a birthday present?"*
  *"No, but I'll **give some thought to** it, if you like."*

demographic

This is a formal or technical word. It is the adjective from the word **demographics**, which means the scientific study of population. The word **demographic** can be replaced by the word **population**:

- *Because of a number of **demographic** changes over the centuries, the area is now virtually uninhabited.*
- *Because of a number of **population** changes over the centuries, the area is now virtually uninhabited.*

fiscal

This is a formal or technical word. It is sometimes used to refer to government finances, but it can also be used to refer to financial matters more generally. It can be replaced by the word **financial, economic** or **monetary**, depending on the context:

- *There is to be an investigation into a number of **fiscal** problems which have arisen in the organization.*
- *There is to be an investigation into a number of **financial** problems which have arisen in the organization.*
- *The government has come under attack for the failure of its **fiscal** policy.*
- *The government has come under attack for the failure of its **financial** policy.*

incapacitated

This is a formal word meaning not able to work, get around, etc. In the context of the passage, it can be replaced with the expression **unfit for work** or **unable to work**:

- *Jim fell off the roof of a house and the accident left him **incapacitated** for several months.*
- *Jim fell off the roof of a house and the accident left him **unfit for work** for several months.*

multifarious

This is a formal word meaning of many different kinds. It can be replaced by an expression such as **various, assorted, a variety of**, etc:

- *It is difficult to say exactly how Bob made his fortune. He has been involved in **multifarious** business activities over the years.*
- *It is difficult to say exactly how Bob made his fortune. He has been involved in **a variety of** business activities over the years.*

rainy, save something for a rainy day

If you **save something for a rainy day**, you put something, usually money, aside until a time of financial difficulty in the future when you will be more in need of it. It is an idiom which has

become a cliché. You can sometimes avoid it by simply using the word **save** or you can make a reference to **putting money aside** or **setting money aside**:

- *Sara and Bob both spend all the money they earn each month and never **save anything for a rainy day**.*
- *Sara and Bob both spend all the money they earn each month and never **put any money aside**.*
- *Sara and Bob both spend all the money they earn each month and never **save anything**.*

shell, shell out

This is an informal expression meaning to pay money. It sometimes implies that the person is either paying a lot of money or is paying unwillingly. The expression can be replaced by an expression such as **pay out, lay out, part with**, etc:

- *All the office workers each **shelled out** several pounds on Anna's wedding present and we didn't even receive a note of thanks.*
- *All the office workers each **parted with** several pounds for Anna's wedding present and we didn't even receive a note of thanks.*

wobbly

In the context of the passage, **wobbly** is an informal word meaning not stable or steady. It can be replaced by a word such as **unsteady, unstable, uncertain** or **wavering**:

- *Now is not a good time to try to sell your house. Property prices are a bit **wobbly** just now.*
- *Now is not a good time to try to sell your house. Property prices are a bit **unstable** just now.*

Exercise 1

A Rephrase each word or phrase in bold without changing its meaning.

1. *Experts in **demographic** statistics indicate that the problem is set to get worse in many developed countries.*

_____

_____

2. *Governments are faced with the problem of how to **foot the bill** incurred by the increase in life expectancy.*

_____

_____

3. *Obviously, those still in work can be asked to **shell out** more in taxes, but they already have **multifarious** outlets for their money.*

_____

_____

4. *Many of them think that the principle of **saving** money **for a rainy day** is all very well.*

_____

_____

5. *So what is to be done? Governments worldwide are **putting their thinking caps on**.*

_____

_____

B Fill in each blank with the correct word in brackets.

1. *There are said to be several _____ officials employed at passport control.* (***venal / venial***)
2. *I would have expected the girls to show more _____ at their father's funeral.* (***sentiment / sentimentality***)
3. *Meg is studying the _____ system in India as part of her course.* (***cast / caste***)
4. *Women workers say that they are being paid less than their male counterparts and are demanding a more _____ system of payment.* (***equable / equitable***)
5. *Mary was embarrassed at committing such a social _____.* (***gaff / gaffe***)

C Tick the idiom that is similar in meaning to the words in bold in each sentence.

1. *With taking care of her young children and looking after her elderly parent, Sue* ***is working so hard that she is exhausting herself.***
   - *a. do someone's dirty work* ☐
   - *b. run yourself into the ground* ☐
   - *c. dig your own grave* ☐
   - *d. chase your tail* ☐
2. *The last managing director was very inefficient and* ***left*** *the company* ***in a very weak state.***
   - *a. break the mould* ☐
   - *b. bring something to its knees* ☐
   - *c. hit the buffers* ☐
   - *d. leave someone to their own devices* ☐
3. *You should* ***not punish*** *the children* ***so severely.*** *They are very young and I don't think they knew what they were doing.*
   - *a. go easy on someone* ☐
   - *b. play it safe* ☐
   - *c. lose your edge* ☐
   - *d. nip something in the bud* ☐

D Fill in the word missing from the idiom in each sentence.

1. *It was discovered that the night watchman was working* ***hand in*** *_____ with the robbers who broke into the warehouse.*
2. *Ben was very quiet and well behaved when he was a teenager living at home, but he began to* ***kick over the*** *_____ as soon as he went away to college.*

British English and American English

The American influence on British English vocabulary is most obvious in the area of slang. British English has adopted some other items of American English and so, for example, we now find the British word **lorry** being used alongside the American equivalent **truck**.

However, from the point of view of vocabulary, British English and American English have stayed, surprisingly, quite far apart. The words for many common things are different in both forms of English. For example, a British **lift** that gets you from floor to floor becomes **elevator** in American English. On the same subject, confusingly, the **ground floor** in British English is the **first floor** in American English. Things relating to cars are often different. For example, **petrol** becomes **gas** in American English and the American equivalent of **motorway** is **freeway**.

Exercise 2

A Delete the American English alternative from the words in bold.

1. *There was something wrong with the car's engine and he lifted the* ***bonnet / hood*** *to have a look.*
2. *Pam served coffee and* ***cookies / biscuits*** *to her guests.*
3. *I really must get that dripping* ***faucet / tap*** *mended.*
4. *Jim wore a red* ***waistcoat / vest*** *over a dark blue shirt.*
5. *Ben was not wearing a jacket, just a shirt and* ***pants / trousers.***

B Delete the British English alternative from the words in bold.

1. *I'm going home to see my parents in the* ***autumn / fall.***
2. *Could you put the luggage in the* ***trunk / boot*** *of the car, please?*
3. *I'll switch on the lights if you pull the* ***curtains / drapes.***
4. *A stone has shattered the truck's* ***windshield / windscreen.***
5. *I sold my house through the local* ***realtor / estate agent.***

Suggested Answers for Vocabulary Building Workbook 4

Unit 1

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. chafe 2. bridal 3. judicial
4. dragooned 5. timbre

C 1. b. dicing with death
2. b. I'm all ears
3. c. give you the thumbs down
4. b. he got cold feet
5. d. I'll keep you posted

Exercise 2

1. on 2. in 3. for 4. to 5. to
6. with 7. of 8. to 9. to 10. in

Unit 2

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. a fish out of water
2. a moth to a flame
3. the wooden spoon
4. a millstone round his neck
5. coming out of her shell

C 1. flaunted 2. duel 3. stimulant
4. yoke 5. wreak

Exercise 2

A 1. A stitch in time saves time.
2. United we stand, divided we fall.
3. What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.
4. Silence is golden.
5. You cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs.

B 1. You can't teach an old dog new tricks.
2. Set a thief to catch a thief.
3. Two wrongs don't make a right.
4. We must learn to walk before we can run.
5. Leave well alone.

C 1. A miss is as good as a mile.
2. Distance lends enchantment to the view.
3. Money is power.
4. He who hesitates is lost.
5. Many hands make light work.

Unit 3

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. I don't have all the latest information
2. makes no impression on her
3. keen to begin
4. belongings
5. in very small amounts

C 1. bonny 2. quash 3. gamble
4. device 5. bated

Exercise 2

1. manufacturer 2. editor
3. exhibitor 4. advertiser
5. cultivator 6. converter/convertor
7. communicator 8. decorator
9. conveyor/conveyer 10. sculptor

Unit 4

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. Corporal 2. fleshly 3. intense
4. liqueurs 5. nutritional

C 1. I'm surprised that you haven't heard by now that Sue won the prize because she's been bragging about it all over the school.
2. The man admits to the murder of the old woman, but he claims that he was of unsound mind at the time.
3. Frank had sustained head injuries in the car crash and so he was able to give only a hazy account.
4. All the parents enjoyed the children's concert, but those who had been to previous ones found it a bit lacking in variety.
5. We have no objections to Bill being interested in politics, but we get bored when he starts haranguing the government.

Exercise 2

2. ceiling 4. heifer 5. seize
6. leisure 10. siege

Unit 5

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. tortuous 2. septic 3. swatted
4. revue 5. proscribed

C 1. b. stand on your own two feet
2. c. take the bull by the horns
3. a. pay dividends
4. b. cleared the hurdle
5. c. Hold your horses!

Exercise 2

A 1. passive 2. passive 3. active
4. active 5. passive

B 1. A man with a knife attacked Jack.
2. The owner's wife was driving the car.
3. A local builder built the house on the hill.
4. The musician's brother wrote the lyrics of the song.
5. The police are still investigating the gruesome murder.

Unit 6

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. run it up the flagpole
2. flies off the handle
3. have a frog in my throat
4. have eyes in the back of your head
5. as the crow flies

C 1. naturalists 2. lurid 3. hoard
4. floundering 5. fearful

Exercise 2

1. click, rattled 2. crash
3. plopped 4. swish
5. tinkle 6. crunched, slithered
7. fluttered 8. rustled, crack
9. clanged 10. gurgled

Unit 7

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.
B 1. breech 2. callus 3 chequered
4. disadvantaged 5. fateful
C 1. impatient
2. speak bluntly
3. die while still working
4. I've nothing much to do
5. shameful secret

Exercise 2

Suggested answers

fine lovely pleasant charming
good smart delicious enjoyable

Unit 8

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.
B 1. fictitious 2. presumptuous 3. unwanted
4. deficient 5. forebear
C 1. unpleasant 2. discussion 3. very wide
D 1. nonsense 2. name

Exercise 2

A 1. the set of technical words or expressions used in a particular subject
2. the scientific study of drugs and their use in medicine
3. the particular way in which words and phrases are arranged
4. the scientific study of diseases
5. the scientific study of birds
B 1. meteorology 2. neurology
3. psychology 4. theology 5. zoology

Unit 9

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.
B 1. satire 2. earthly 3. filtrating
4. systemic 5. enormity
C 1. The teenager seemed unconcerned about the crime which he had committed, but his parents were apprehensive about the possible repercussions of his action.
2. We knew that something was wrong because John's mien was very grave.
3. The story was about brave warriors fighting mythical animals.
D 1. food 2. easy/undemanding

Exercise 2

A 1. crew 2. school/shoal 3. congregation
4. fleet 5. herd 6. swarm 7. pride
8. pack 9. litter 10. troop
B 1. stars 2. geese 3. witches
4. ships/aircraft 5. mourners

Unit 10

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.
B 1. endemic 2. tasty 3. borne
4. alternate 5. barbarous
C 1. c. castles in Spain
2. c. has what it takes
3. a. go cap in hand to someone
4. b. gone to the dogs
5. b. knew the score

Exercise 2

1. rapid 2. deal with 3. quarrel 4. struck
5. shortage 6. complex 7. rotting 8. tranquil
9. endure 10. unsuitable

Unit 11

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.
B 1. hereditary 2. honorary 3. defensible
4. permissible 5. consul
C 1. caught the drift 2. put a foot wrong
3. is right up your street/alley
D 1. had no influence on 2. had no hope of success

Exercise 2

1. enthuse 2. donate 3. caretake
4. televise 5. housekeep 6. reminisce
7. intuit 8. burgle 9. eavesdrop
10. shoplift

Unit 12

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.
B 1. biased 2. praising 3. healing
4. legal 5. indigestion
C 1. personalities 2. masterly 3. congenital
4. cumulative 5. ascetic

Exercise 2

1. more wonderful 2. less 3. sunnier
4. more ridiculous 5. unluckier 6. drier
7. spryer 8. more gracious
9. floppier 10. more hopeless

Unit 13

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.
B 1. glazier 2. funereal 3. lumbar
4. regal 5. affects
C 1. Family ties are stronger than the ties of friendship.
2. has a very bad reputation
3. get up very early
4. been very difficult
5. reveal/confess

Exercise 2

1. I 2. me 3. me 4. me/I 5. I
6. me 7. me 8. I 9. me 10. me

Unit 14

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. waive 2. averse 3. creditable
4. devolution 5. discus

C 1. making a great deal of money
2. scolded us 3. favourite drink
4. Go away! 5. man dressed as a woman

Exercise 2

1. goslings 2. majorette 3. statuette 4. flatlet
5. droplets 6. booklet 7. streamlet 8. starlets
9. bullock 10. princeling

Unit 15

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. detract 2. flair 3. compulsive
4. hale 5. fortuitously

C 1. leading her up the garden path
2. made a killing
3. had a soft spot for
4. had a finger in the pie
5. hit the ground running

Exercise 2

1. The families of the accident victims have elected a spokeperson to talk to the press.
2. Each parent must write down their child's name and date of birth.
3. Every teacher must take their share of supervising detention.
4. We need an extra salesperson in the gift department at Christmas.
5. Many a student regrets not having paid enough attention to their school work.
6. It is necessary for the committee to appoint a new chairperson.
7. It's vital to get the right person for the job.
8. Every single learner driver must pass their driving test before they drive on their own.
9. All people have a right to freedom of speech.
10. Either worker may take their lunch break now.

Unit 16

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. shape up or ship out 2. lose any sleep
3. get it up and running 4. ran it to earth
5. fanned the flames

C 1. politic 2. commissionaire 3. suite
4. coop 5. industrial

Exercise 2

1. Whose 2. Who's 3. Who's 4. whose
5. Who's 6. whose 7. whose 8. whose
9. whose 10. Who's

Unit 17

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. epitaph 2. whoop 3. fount
4. laths 5. discriminating

C 1. it was mediocre 2. very pale
3. of very high quality 4. seem likely to be true
5. danced

Exercise 2

grew	persuade	contact
came	preparing	understand
acquired	obtained	became

Unit 18

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. as wily as a fox 2. as thin as a rake
3. as fit as a fiddle 4. as tough as old boots
5. as helpless as a babe in arms

C 1. perpetuating 2. shelve 3. pungent
4. social 5. topees

Exercise 2

1. You're 2. you're 3. your, your 4. your
5. you're 6. Your 7. your
8. You're, your 9. You're, your 10. you're

Unit 19

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. warden 2. strife 3. lifelong
4. reign 5. plaintiff

C 1. The principal expressed his gratitude to the teachers for all their hard work.
2. Ben played a vital role in the organization.
3. Jane has gone to the chemist's to buy a depilatory.
4. People are saying that the firm has gone bankrupt, but, at the moment, this is all just speculation.
5. Lucy is not very well, but she has to go to work to get money to feed her children.

Exercise 2

A feminine, masculine, neuter, masculine, feminine, neuter, feminine, masculine, feminine, masculine, feminine, masculine.

B nanny goat, boar, jenny, stallion, maidservant, cock, drake, goose, duke, swan, stewardess, authoress.

Unit 20

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. slowly and heavily
2. relevant
3. has more than one meaning
4. dislikes women

C 1. proceeded 2. loath 3. loose
4. meter 5. coarse

Exercise 2

1. considerable
2. quite an expensive house
3. rather secretive
4. to a considerable extent
5. quite an experienced salesman
6. a difficult task

7. very upset
8. not feeling at all in holiday mood
9. an experienced cook
10. rather jealous

Unit 21

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. vortex 2. vigilant 3. bouquet 4. outward 5. bail

C 1. the way things would be like in the future
2. am I always the one
3. doesn't have any defence
4. for a very long time
5. I was extremely nervous

Exercise 2

1. *a tiger* when it came to defending her children. Although usually very mild, she became very fierce when she needed to defend her children.
2. the fields were sparkling with *icy diamonds*. The fields were covered in sparkling frost.
3. She was *a pearl among pebbles*. She was something very beautiful or special among quite ordinary people.
4. *a shroud of melancholy* fell on Lucy. Lucy became very sad and depressed.
5. his second wife was *wielding the knife of betrayal*. Bob's second wife was betraying him as his first wife had done and it felt like someone stabbing him.
6. her feet had become *blocks of lead*. Her feet seemed to have become very heavy and she could not run.
7. *the brightest jewel in the crown of the emperor*. His youngest daughter was the person who was most dear and precious to him.
8. *the flames of love were extinguished*. Her love for him was dead within two weeks.
9. she began to *see the light at the end of the tunnel*. She began to feel more hopeful and optimistic.
10. university lecturing was *an uncharted sea* to him. University lecturing was an area about which he had no experience.

Unit 22

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. perimeter 2. ballot 3. continuous 4. reversion 5. ambivalent

C 1. gives him the third degree
2. are on a roll
3. scratched his head over
4. set his face against
5. pulled a fast one on

Exercise 2

1. youngish 2. warmish 3. coldish 4. Turkish 5. fiftyish 6. bookish 7. plainish 8. Polish 9. boorish 10. sweetish

Unit 23

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. as happy as a pig in muck
2. as brown as a berry
3. as keen as mustard
4. as patient as Job
5. drunk as a lord

C 1. bloc 2. abuse 3. activating 4. notable 5. draft

Exercise 2

1. fearful of heights or high places
2. someone who fears, or avoids using, technology
3. a fear of dogs
4. a morbid fear of darkness or the night
5. a fear of depths/the deep
6. a fear of the number 13
7. a fear of fishes
8. a fear of birds
9. fearful of marriage or becoming a father
10. a fear of (the sight of) blood; a morbid horror of corpses

Unit 24

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. faint 2. dubious 3. grisly 4. hulls 5. inveigled

C 1. a great deal of money
2. pectoral muscles (chest muscles)
3. horses (horse racing)
4. leave stealthily or furtively
5. aggressive and egotistic

Exercise 2

1. hypercritical 2. hypotensive
3. hypodermic syringe 4. hypochondriac
5. hyperventilate 6. hypothermia
7. hypersensitive 8. hypermarket
9. hyperacidity 10. hypertension

Unit 25

Exercise 1

A Answers can be found in Vocabulary Study.

B 1. venal 2. sentiment 3. caste 4. equitable 5. gaffe

C 1. b. is running herself into the ground
2. b. brought the company to its knees
3. a. go easy on

D 1. hand in glove 2. kick over the traces

Exercise 2

A 1. bonnet 2. biscuits 3. tap 4. waistcoat 5. trousers

B 1. fall 2. trunk 3. drapes 4. windshield 5. realtor

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This series of four workbooks is specifically designed to provide students with a sound understanding of English vocabulary and ample practice in its use.

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About the Writer

A graduate of Edinburgh University, ***Betty Kirkpatrick*** has had a long and distinguished career as editor, publisher and writer of English reference books. She was the editor of the *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*, the editor of *Roget's Thesaurus* and the compiler of the *Oxford Paperback Thesaurus*. Her *Dictionary of Clichés*, published by Bloomsbury, is also available in a US edition and a Japanese edition. A language consultant to the *Encarta Dictionary* and a consultant to Collins school dictionaries, she writes a weekly language column for the *Herald* newspaper, based in Glasgow.

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