

## Lesson 20 Words You Thought You Knew

You already know how to pronounce and use these familiar words. Now learn some of their less-familiar meanings.

### account

VERB to give a satisfactory explanation or reason; used with *for* [Can you *account for* your tardiness?]

NOUN a statement, report, or description [I gave my *account* of the accident.]

### character

1. the behavior, qualities, or features of a person or thing; personality; nature [Judge her by her *character*, not by her appearance.]

2. moral strength; self-discipline; honesty [The question is whether either candidate has *character*.]

3. a letter, figure, or symbol used in writing or printing [The *&* *character* means "and."]

### execute

VERB to put into effect or action; to do; to fulfill [We have discussed this plan thoroughly; now it's time to *execute* it.]

### fix

VERB 1. to fasten tightly or permanently; to set firmly in place [Fix the tile to the wall.]

VERB 2. to influence in advance the result or action of a race, election, and so on, to one's advantage [One lawyer tried to *fix* the trial by bribing the judge.]

NOUN a difficult or awkward situation [We were left in a *fix* when our flight was canceled at the last minute.]

### foil

VERB to keep from being successful [A soldier loyal to the government tried to *foil* the revolt.]

### initial

ADJECTIVE having to do with or occurring at the beginning; first [Felix's *initial* reaction was anger, but he calmed down later.]

### jar

VERB to shake or vibrate from a sudden shock or collision; to cause shaking or vibration; to jolt [If you *jar* the table, the water may spill.]

### lark

NOUN something done just for fun; playful adventure [As a *lark*, we hid Louisa's keys.]

### mock

ADJECTIVE not real; imitation [The crown was covered with *mock* jewels, and what appeared to be gold was actually brass.]

### peer

NOUN a person who has the same rank, value, or qualities as another; an equal [Teenagers often care more about what their *peers* approve of than what their parents and other adults think.]



What a bunch of characters!

### sound

ADJECTIVE 1. in good condition; sturdy [The engine is *sound*, but the tires need to be replaced.]  
2. sensible; wise; dependable [The argument was *sound*, and it convinced us.]

### stalk

VERB 1. to walk in a stiff, proud, or angry manner [If a waiter annoys Lila, she will *stalk* right out of the restaurant.]  
2. to hunt, track, or pursue, especially quietly or sneakily [We watched a cat *stalk* a bird.]

### steel

VERB to make hard, strong, or tough [I need to *steel* myself to tell my aunt the truth.]

### uniform

ADJECTIVE 1. always the same; not changing [The weather was quite *uniform* from day to day.]  
2. showing little or no difference in form, size, design, or parts [Packaged cookies are more *uniform* than those made at home.]

### vault

VERB to leap (over) something [I thought that guy was about to *vault* right over the counter.]

# Lesson 21

**aimless** AIM•lis ADJECTIVE

without purpose or direction [We passed the time with *aimless* conversation, just chatting about this and that.]

**assailant** uh•SAY•lunt NOUN

a person who attacks [Ralph was knocked off his bike by an *assailant*.]

**barter** BAR•tur

VERB to trade by exchanging goods or services without using money [Jerry used his old mitt to *barter* for his friend's hockey stick.]

NOUN the act of bartering; the things that are traded this way [Before money existed, people got what they needed through *barter*.]

**coincide** koh•in•SIDE VERB

1. to occur at the same time [Our birthdays *coincide*, so we often combine our parties.]
2. to agree exactly; to be just alike [Lily's goals and her parents' hopes for her *coincide*.]

**drab** DRAB ADJECTIVE

not bright or lively; dull and cheerless [The shed was painted a *drab* gray.]

**elusive** ee•LOO•suv ADJECTIVE

hard to capture [We tried for two weeks to catch that *elusive* cat.]

**frigid** FRIJ•id ADJECTIVE

1. extremely cold; without heat [Our furnace broke, and the entire house is *frigid*.]
2. lacking warmth of feeling; stiff and formal [Mary's *frigid* greeting revealed her anger.]

**TEACHER:** Use the word *frigid* in a sentence.

**STUDENT 1:** If our frigid work right, our food'd stay good and cold. (And if the furnace'd work right, my family'd stay good and warm.)

**grotesque** groh•TESK ADJECTIVE

very odd, abnormal, strange, or ugly in shape or appearance [After the car accident, my battered and bruised face looked *grotesque*.]

**impudence** IM•pyuh•dunce NOUN

rude disrespect; unashamed boldness [The umpire was shocked by the player's *impudence*.]

**mimicry** MIM•ik•ree NOUN

the act of copying or imitating; imitation [A parrot's ability at *mimicry* is amazing.]

**mute** MYOOT

ADJECTIVE 1. unable or unwilling to speak [I was *mute* with embarrassment.]

ADJECTIVE 2. not spoken [Peter's frightened eyes were a *mute* call for help.]

VERB to muffle or soften the sound of [That scarf around your face *mutes* your voice.]

**ominous** OM•uh•nus ADJECTIVE

threatening harm or evil [We heard the *ominous* roar of a tornado.]

**TEACHER:** Use the word *ominous* in a sentence.

**STUDENT 2:** Ominous see a scary movie this weekend.



**prejudice** PREJ•uh•dus NOUN

1. an opinion formed before the facts are known or in spite of the facts; an opinion formed without taking time to judge fairly [My aunt has a *prejudice* against rock music, but I think she'd like some of it if she'd just listen.]
2. hatred or suspicion of other races, religions, and so on [Babies are not born with *prejudice*; it has to be taught to them.]

**rectify** REK•tuh•fy VERB

to make right; to correct [Tina lost my sweater and tried to *rectify* the situation by buying me another one.]

**veneer** vuh•NEER NOUN

1. a thin layer of high-quality wood or other material used to cover a surface [The table was cheap pine with an oak *veneer*.]
2. an outward appearance that is attractive but misleading [Len covered up his mean nature with a *veneer* of friendliness.]

## Lesson 22

**alienate** ALE•yuh•nate VERB

to make uninterested or unfriendly; to take away interest or affection [Her terrible behavior is sure to *alienate* her whole family.]

**banish** BAN•ish VERB

1. to send or drive away; to get rid of [The woman's reassuring words helped to *banish* the child's fears.]
2. to force to leave a place by order of some high authority [The new law will *banish* all foreigners from the country.]

**dissension** di•SEN•shun NOUN

disagreement; quarreling; hard feelings caused by a difference of opinion [There was some *dissension* about which team uniforms to get.]

**edible** ED•uh•bul ADJECTIVE

fit to eat; safe to eat [Are those *edible* mushrooms or poisonous ones?]

**implore** im•PLORE VERB

to beg earnestly; to ask urgently [We *implore* you to give us more time.]

**lackadaisical** lak•uh•DAY•zi•kul ADJECTIVE

showing a lack of interest or spirit; lifeless and uninterested [Lori was told to scrub the table, but she just gave it a *lackadaisical* swipe with the dishcloth.]

**optional** OP•shuh•nul ADJECTIVE

left to one's choice; not required or automatic [Your name is required, but giving your address is *optional*.]

**painstaking** PAINZ•take•ing ADJECTIVE

requiring or using great effort or care [Making a fine violin is *painstaking* work.]

**plumage** PLOOM•ij NOUN

all of a bird's feathers (plumes) together [The swans settled down to groom their *plumage*.]

**reprimand** REP•ruh•mand

NOUN a sharp scolding or criticism, especially by a person in authority [A *reprimand* from the boss got the staff back to work immediately.]

VERB to scold or criticize sharply [I expected my mother to *reprimand* me for being rude.]

**scanty** SKAN•tee ADJECTIVE

small in quantity or amount; not enough or barely enough; in short supply [Only half a sandwich makes a *scanty* meal.]

**sinister** SIN•us•tur ADJECTIVE

1. suggesting harm, evil, or misfortune; threatening [One look at the *sinister* clouds made us realize a big storm was coming.]
2. evil; wicked [A chill went up the victim's spine as he saw the robber's *sinister* smile.]

**transaction** trans•AK•shun NOUN

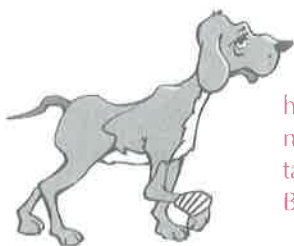
the act of carrying on business; an individual piece of business, such as a deal or agreement [The company president handles the important *transactions* herself.]

**unscathed** un•SKATHED ADJECTIVE

in no way harmed or injured; unhurt [The tornado destroyed some parts of the city but left other areas *unscathed*.]

**upstanding** up•STAN•ding ADJECTIVE

honest and respectable in character and behavior; honorable [The mayor praised the children as *upstanding* citizens for their help in the city's tree-planting program.]



A dog with a bandaged foot limped into Deadwood one day. The sheriff eyed him suspiciously. "Listen, stranger, I don't mean ta alienate ya, an' I'd sure hate ta have ta banish ya. So let's not have no dissension. But I gotta tell ya, mister, ya look kinda

sinister, and this here's a peaceful town full o' fine upstandin' folk. So why doncha tell me what brang ya ta Deadwood t'day."

The dog spat on the ground, glared at the sheriff, and snarled, "I'm lookin' fer the man who shot my paw."

## Lesson 23

**abusive** uh•BYOO•suv ADJECTIVE

involving abuse or mistreatment; hurtful  
[Careless and *abusive* treatment made the CD player stop working properly.]

**compromise** KOM•pruh•mize

NOUN a settlement in which each side gives up something; a thing midway between two other things in quality, effect, and so on  
[Some wanted the new uniforms to be red and blue, while others wanted gold and black; the *compromise* was red and gold.]

VERB to settle by making a compromise  
[Let's *compromise* on where to have dinner.]

**concise** kun•SICE ADJECTIVE

expressing much in a few words; brief and clear  
[*Concise* directions give all of the necessary information without going into too much detail.]

**denial** dee•NY•ul NOUN

1. the act of denying, or saying no to a request  
[I asked for permission, but Mom shook her head in *denial*.]

2. a statement declaring something to be untrue  
[Mr. Lewis's accusation was met by a *denial* from his son.]

**durable** DUR•uh•bul ADJECTIVE

able to resist change, stress, or frequent use; lasting; stable  
[Their friendship was as *durable* as a pair of good boots.]

**excel** ek•SEL VERB

to be superior to others in ability, quality, or achievement; to outdo  
[Maria *excels* at both math and volleyball.]

**ferocity** fuh•ROSS•uh•tee NOUN

the state or quality of being ferocious; cruelty; fierceness; savageness  
[The *ferocity* of the attack stunned everyone.]

**goad** GOAD VERB

to drive into action; to urge  
[The bully tried to *goad* Jesse into a fight.]

**hovel** HUV•ul NOUN

a small, miserable dwelling; a hut; a shack  
[Living conditions in the peasants' *hovels* were truly terrible.]

**intricate** IN•tri•kut ADJECTIVE

full of complex details; complicated  
[Inside the clock was an *intricate* system of parts.]



### Qualities of a Dragon

A "good" dragon excels at ferocity. It has extremely durable, armor-like skin. Its behavior is abusive to humans (especially knights), and it enjoys capturing beautiful ladies and burning up people's palaces and hovels. A dragon also has a very big appetite.

**luster** LUSS•tur NOUN

a bright shine; brightness; radiance; gloss  
[The newly polished floor took on a golden *luster* in the morning sunlight.]

**rebellious** ruh•BEL•yus ADJECTIVE

resisting control or authority; difficult to treat, handle, or deal with  
[During the Boston Tea Party, *rebellious* colonists dumped British tea in Boston Harbor to protest a new tea tax.]

**recollect** rek•uh•LEKT VERB

to call back to mind; to recall; to remember  
[Can you *recollect* what he told us to do?]

**turbulent** TUR•byoo•lunt ADJECTIVE

full of violent motion or activity; not smooth or calm  
[The ship's progress was slowed by the *turbulent* seas.]

**valiant** VAL•yunt ADJECTIVE

brave; courageous; heroic  
[The team's *valiant* efforts resulted in a come-from-behind victory.]



## Lesson 24

**affliction** uh•FLIK•shun NOUN

pain or distress; suffering; anything that causes pain, distress, or suffering [The Wilsons have faced many *afflictions* of their own, but they're always ready to help others in need.]

**akin** uh•KIN ADJECTIVE

alike; similar [The two boys were *akin* in their love of hiking.]

**askew** uh•SKYOO

ADJECTIVE turned or twisted the wrong way; crooked [When Billy got up from his nap, his clothes were all *askew*.]

ADVERB out of the proper position; crookedly [The man's tie hung *askew*.]

**cunning** KUN•ing

NOUN cleverness in deceiving, lying, or trickery; slyness [The spy's *cunning* made everyone think she was an ordinary tourist.]

ADJECTIVE having or showing cunning; sly [The fox is known as a *cunning* animal.]

**exemplify** eg•ZEM•pluh•fy VERB

to show by example; to serve as an example of [A championship team should *exemplify* good sportsmanship.]

**handily** HAN•di•lee ADVERB

1. skillfully or easily [The waiter *handily* balanced four platters of food at once.]

2. in a handy manner; conveniently [The light switch was *handily* positioned where I could reach it from my bed.]

**injurious** in•JOOR•ee•us ADJECTIVE

causing or likely to cause injury or damage; harmful [The really *injurious* potholes are the ones you don't see until you hit them.]

**nondescript** non•di•SKRIPT ADJECTIVE

hard to describe or classify because of having no remarkable or unusual quality [No one will even notice you in that *nondescript* outfit.]

**obliterate** uh•BLIT•ur•ate VERB

to blot out or wear away, leaving no trace; to erase [It took only a few waves to *obliterate* the sand castle.]

**periodically** peer•ee•OD•uh•klee ADVERB

happening either regularly or occasionally [The nurses checked *periodically* to see that Mrs. Lang was comfortable.]

**perturb** pur•TURB VERB

to disturb greatly; to upset or make uneasy [If I'm alone at night, odd noises *perturb* me.]

**rebuke** ri•BYOOK

NOUN a scolding [Javier knew he deserved the *rebuke* he got.]

VERB to blame or scold [Don't *rebuke* her for something that wasn't her fault!]

**rendezvous** RON•duh•voo

NOUN an agreement to meet at a set time and place or the meeting itself [Our *rendezvous* was set for noon at the Riverside Cafe.]

VERB to meet at a fixed time and place [We can decide on the details of the plan when we *rendezvous* tomorrow.]

**sorely** SOR•lee ADVERB

severely; greatly [The school *sorely* needs new computers; the ones we're using now are practically antiques.]

**unorthodox** un•OR•thuh•dox ADJECTIVE

not in keeping with usual beliefs, customs, and so on ["This method may be *unorthodox*," said the engineer, "but I think it's worth trying, since the normal methods haven't worked."]

My friend Stanley used to do a trick that he called the Tornado. It was risky, but it had never been injurious. Once, though, Stanley's legs went askew in mid-air. The result was an unorthodox, unplanned landing and a sorely sore Stanley.



MY NEIGHBORHOOD HEROES (OR WHATEVER)

## Lesson 25

### **aloof** uh•LOOF

ADJECTIVE not emotionally involved; not interested; emotionally distant [The prince's *aloof* attitude toward his subjects did not make him popular.]

ADVERB at a distance; not involved; apart [Kyle watched the parade from his window, *aloof* from the crowd on the street.]

### **deceased** di•SEEST

NOUN dead person or persons [On Memorial Day, we honor the *deceased* who gave their lives in American wars.]

ADJECTIVE dead [My aunt, who is now *deceased*, used to tell wonderful stories.]

### **derisive** di•RY•siv ADJECTIVE

scornful; mocking [My clumsy dive was met by *derisive* laughter.]

### **intensive** in•TEN•siv ADJECTIVE

showing or requiring great effort, force, or attention; thorough [*Intensive* research has led to new treatments for some kinds of cancer.]

### **murky** MURK•ee ADJECTIVE

dark, gloomy, or hard to see through [*Murky* waters kept divers from finding the sunken fishing boat.]

### **nimble** NIM•bul ADJECTIVE

moving lightly and quickly [Mountain goats are *nimble* climbers on rocky slopes.]

### **phenomenal** fuh•NOM•uh•nul ADJECTIVE

very unusual; extraordinary [The new toy's rapid sales made it a *phenomenal* success.]

### **pivot** PIV•ut

NOUN 1. the pin or shaft on which a thing turns [An axle for a wheel is a kind of *pivot*.]

NOUN 2. a turning movement [With a quick *pivot*, she faced me.]

VERB to turn on, or as if on, a pivot [Watch that gymnast *pivot* around the bar.]

### **repel** ri•PEL VERB

1. to drive back or away; to resist or refuse [This material will *repel* heat and moisture.]

2. to cause dislike or disgust [Cruelty to animals *repels* me.]

### **secretive** SEE•kruh•tiv ADJECTIVE

keeping one's thoughts, feelings, or actions from others [Ann's *secretive* smile made us wonder what she was thinking about.]

### **squabble** SKWAH•bul

NOUN a noisy quarrel about something unimportant [It was a dumb *squabble* over the difference between two shades of blue.]

VERB to take part in a squabble [Gus and I *squabble* all the time; it's no big deal.]

### **superficial** soo•pur•FISH•ul ADJECTIVE

1. not deep; on the surface [Even a *superficial* scalp injury can cause heavy bleeding.]

2. not thorough; incomplete; concerned with or understanding only what is on the surface or most obvious [A *superficial* reading may not reveal a poem's true meaning.]

### **unearth** un•EARTH VERB

1. to dig up from out of the earth [Experts were brought in to *unearth* the ancient bones.]

2. to find out by searching or studying; to discover [Police failed to *unearth* any new evidence.]

Even after Dracula has slept in the ground all day, he's neat and clean when he *unearths* himself. How *unearth* does he do that?

### **veranda** vuh•RAN•duh NOUN

an open, roofed porch along one or more sides of a building [The old hotel's *veranda* had white pillars.]

### **wearisome** WEER•ee•sum ADJECTIVE

causing weariness or boredom; tiring or tiresome [It was a *wearisome* trip, and I could hardly wait to get back home.]



"See?  
Nothing  
up my  
cape!"