

Lesson 14

abstain ab•STAIN VERB

to hold back from doing or participating in something [If you have an upset stomach, you should *abstain* from eating spicy food.]

balderdash BALL•dur•dash NOUN

talk or writing that is worthless because it makes no sense [Katrina thought the poem was brilliant; I thought it was *balderdash*.]

canny KAN•ee ADJECTIVE

clever and cautious; showing sharp understanding in one's dealings [Merilee always has money because she's *canny* about spending it.]

dogged DOG•id ADJECTIVE

not giving in readily; staying with an activity in a steady way [Paula kept working away in a *dogged* manner even after the rest of us had quit and gone home.]

enlighten en•LITE•un VERB

to provide information in a way that frees one from ignorance; to give the light of knowledge to [A week on my uncle's ranch was enough to *enlighten* me about the difficulties of cattle ranching.]

haggard HAG•urd ADJECTIVE

having a worn look, as from grief, illness, or strain [The photos captured the *haggard* faces of the refugees.]

humdrum HUM•drum ADJECTIVE

boringly ordinary [I wish something exciting would interrupt my *humdrum* existence.]

oaf OAF NOUN

a clumsy, stupid person [It's better to be an *oaf* on the dance floor than in personal relationships.]

plagiarize PLAY•juh•rize VERB

to copy written work done by someone else and present it as one's own [If you *plagiarize* a magazine article instead of writing your own report, you won't deserve a passing grade.]

plummet PLUM•it VERB

to fall straight down; to plunge [If a helicopter's blades stopped turning, it would *plummet* to the ground.]

savagery SAV•ij•ree NOUN

1. the condition of being wild, fierce, or untamed [The dog, which had never had an owner, showed the *savagery* of a wolf.]
2. an act of cruelty or fierceness [We were horrified by the *savagery* of the attack.]

tangible TAN•juh•bul ADJECTIVE

1. able to be touched or felt by touch; having physical form [The coins in his pocket were a *tangible* reward for his work.]
2. specific enough to be grasped with the mind; definite; not vague [The cops suspected Lefty McGurk of the burglaries, but they hadn't yet found any *tangible* proof of his guilt.]

The dishonest Lefty McGurk
Would burgle and steal with a smirk.
He hadn't much brain,
But he couldn't abstain
From attempting unscrupulous work.

Well, McGurk was an oaf, and his goof
Was to trip and to fall through a roof.
Now, it sure isn't canny
To fall on your fanny
While holding a huge sack of proof.

The cops' ultimatum:
"Freeze, Lefty!"



ultimatum ul•tuh•MATE•um NOUN

a final demand—one that, if refused, will end all dealings [The landlord gave the Smiths an *ultimatum*: "Pay up or move out."]

unscrupulous un•SKROO•pyuh•luss ADJECTIVE

without moral principals [Jody is *unscrupulous* in getting what she wants; she'll do anything.]

zany ZAY•nee ADJECTIVE

funny in a foolish or crazy way [I Love Lucy is a TV show famous for the *zany* adventures of the main character, Lucy.]

Exercise A: Questions

Write the **Word** that best answers the question.

USE A WORD ONLY ONE
TIME IN EACH EXERCISE.

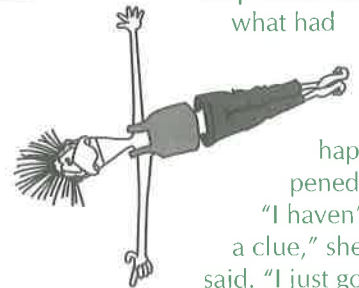
1. What must a patient do with regard to activity when a doctor orders complete bed rest? _____
2. What describes people who refuse to let failure stop them? _____
3. What would a rock do if you dropped it from a roof? _____
4. What do teachers attempt to do to their students? _____
5. What would an honest writer *never* do? _____

A woman fell from a third-story window and plummeted to the ground below. A man rushing to help asked her what had

Exercise B: Antonyms

Write the **Word** that is an antonym for each set of words.

6. exciting; interesting; extraordinary _____
7. energetic; bright-eyed; rested _____
8. honest; fair; trustworthy _____
9. faint; uncertain; unclear _____
10. suggestion; request; plea _____
11. kindness; tenderness; mercy _____



happened. "I haven't a clue," she said. "I just got here myself!" ■

Exercise C: Synonyms

Write the **Word** that could be used in place of each underlined word or phrase.

12. Oh, please! That excuse is pure nonsense. _____
13. The viciousness of Mandy's response was shocking. _____
14. Brita's ongoing and determined efforts finally paid off. _____
15. To be healthier I have to stop myself from eating junk food. _____
16. I don't understand the game; please educate me about the rules. _____
17. Joel's silly, comical behavior gave him a reputation as class clown. _____
18. The splintered door frame was actual proof that someone had broken into the house. _____
19. That candidate's smart, sly, knowing approach to running a campaign won the election. _____

"I do know this sidewalk is tangible!"

Exercise D: Matching

Match each phrase on the left to the phrase on the right that means the same, or nearly the same, thing.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| ___ 20. observe an oaf | A. purposeful private eye |
| ___ 21. canny customer | B. steal some sentences |
| ___ 22. dogged detective | C. behold a bungler |
| ___ 23. playfully plummet | D. everyday event |
| ___ 24. humdrum happening | E. fall fast for fun |
| ___ 25. plagiarize a paragraph | F. sharp shopper |



A giraffe, a turtle, and an elephant arrived at a small watering hole at the same time. The turtle said to the elephant, "Watch your step, you big oaf!"

The elephant picked up the turtle, tossed it high in the air, and then grinned as it plummeted into a nearby dune.

The canny giraffe moved to a safer distance before saying, "Enlighten me, please, as to why you responded with such savagery to such a mild little insult!"

"Aw, the insult was nothing," the elephant sniffed. "I recognized him as the same unscrupulous old turtle who cheated me seventeen years ago."

Exercise E: Analogies

Write the letter of the word that completes the analogy.

- | | | | | |
|---|------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| ___ 26. cheater : unscrupulous :: genius : | A. foolish | B. famous | C. intelligent | D. considerate |
| ___ 27. laugh : cry :: plummet : | A. soar | B. roll | C. crawl | D. spread |
| ___ 28. lion : savagery :: lamb : | A. wool | B. sheep | C. pasture | D. gentleness |
| ___ 29. give : take :: enlighten : | A. ignore | B. change | C. confuse | D. burden |

Exercise F: Put It Briefly

Write the ~~Word~~ that best completes each sentence. This exercise continues on the next page.

30. With wild animals as my enemies, cleverness and bravery weren't enough. I needed something solid—a club or another real object—that I could use as a weapon. *Briefly*, I needed something
31. Milton wasn't being serious, not at all. He was being nutty, and he entertained everyone with his goofy, wild, dizzy, absurd behavior. *Briefly*, Milton was being
32. That guy insults people without meaning to, says exactly the wrong thing at the wrong time, behaves like a numbskull and a bonehead, and is a dope. *Briefly*, he's a real
33. There wasn't anything reasonable in the argument. Every objection was stupid and silly, the points she made were ridiculous, and the ideas were baloney. *Briefly*, the argument was total

34. My boss put her foot down, saying that things were going to change and I had no choice about it. I could either do as she **said**, or she'd fire me. That was that. *Briefly*, she gave me a clear
35. The woman looked overworked and exhausted. She had circles under her eyes; she was pale; she appeared to be ready to collapse from worry and trouble. *Briefly*, she was

Quick LIST

abstain V.
balderdash N.
canny ADJ.
dogged ADJ.
enlighten V.
haggard ADJ.
humdrum ADJ.
oaf N.
plagiarize V.
plummet V.
savagery N.
tangible ADJ.
ultimatum N.
unscrupulous ADJ.
zany ADJ.

"Goodness," replied the giraffe, "seventeen years ago! You have an amazing memory!"

"Yup," the elephant said. "Turtle recall." ■



"Usually my parachute opens."

Question:

What do you have when an unscrupulous cheater is half-buried in sand?

Answer: Not enough sand

Exercise G: Fill-in

Write the **Word** that best completes each sentence.

36. The _____ actions of the circus clowns made the children howl with laughter.
37. My parents _____ from drinking coffee at night because it keeps them from sleeping.
38. Mitchell is so _____ about making a bargain that he almost always comes out on top.
39. Danielle felt like a total _____ when she knocked over the shelves at the store.
40. Listen carefully while I try to _____ you, and then maybe you'll understand.
41. Grizzly bears are known for their _____, so every effort should be made to avoid them.
42. It's both lazy and dishonorable to _____ other people's work instead of doing your own.
43. A storekeeper with a reputation for being _____ will soon have few customers.
44. Both Mr. and Mrs. Rodriguez looked _____ after a week as new parents with little sleep.
45. The paper Alf handed in was a _____ indication that he has been working harder.
46. A hawk or an eagle may _____ from the sky to snatch a chicken or rabbit from the ground.
47. That rumor is just _____; surely nobody would believe such rubbish.
48. It was the _____ efforts of two FBI agents, who never gave up, that finally led to the criminal's capture.
49. I spent a _____ day, following my usual routine and wishing something interesting would happen.
50. His _____ was clear; if she didn't agree to marry him, he would break up with her.