



Hear the words for this Unit pronounced, defined, and used in sentences at www.vocabularyworkshop.com.

Definitions

Note carefully the spelling, pronunciation, part(s) of speech, and definition(s) of each of the following words. Then write the word in the blank space(s) in the illustrative sentence(s) following. Finally, study the lists of synonyms and antonyms given at the end of each entry.

1. affable
(af' ə bəl)

(*adj.*) courteous and pleasant, sociable, easy to speak to
We spent a pleasant afternoon with our _____ neighbors.

SYNONYMS: genial, amicable, agreeable, cordial
ANTONYMS: surly, cantankerous, dour, inhospitable

2. aggrandize
(ə gran' dīz)

(*v.*) to increase in greatness, power, or wealth; to build up or intensify; to make appear greater
John D. Rockefeller worked to _____ his empire by purchasing oil wells, refineries, and pipelines.

SYNONYMS: augment, amplify, enhance, exalt
ANTONYMS: reduce, decrease, diminish

3. amorphous
(ə mōr' fəs)

(*adj.*) shapeless, without definite form; of no particular type or character; without organization, unity, or cohesion
The _____ body of the amoeba was fascinating to watch under the microscope.

SYNONYMS: formless, unstructured, nebulous, inchoate
ANTONYMS: definite, well-defined, clear-cut

4. aura
(ōr' ə)

(*n.*) that which surrounds (as an atmosphere); a distinctive air or personal quality
What people thought was her _____ of mystery was actually a mask for her shyness.

SYNONYMS: ambience, atmosphere

5. contraband
(kän' trə band)

(*n.*) illegal traffic, smuggled goods; (*adj.*) illegal, prohibited
Three jeweled combs from the 17th century were among the _____ seized by the police.

SYNONYMS: (*adj.*) illicit, bootleg, unlawful
ANTONYMS: (*adj.*) legal, lawful, licit

6. erudite
(er' yū dīt)

(*adj.*) scholarly, learned, bookish, pedantic
For my paper, I would like to find an _____ history of the subject written in a clear and unbiased manner.

SYNONYMS: profoundly educated, well-read
ANTONYMS: ignorant, uneducated, illiterate

7. gossamer
(gās' ə mə)

(*adj.*) thin, light, delicate, insubstantial; (*n.*) a very thin, light cloth
Ghosts are often depicted in literature as wearing _____ clothing that makes them seem all the more ethereal.

The book was so old that each finely printed page seemed only the weight of _____.

SYNONYMS: (*adj.*) filmy, diaphanous, sheer, airy, feathery, gauzy
ANTONYMS: (*adj.*) thick, dense, solid, massive

8. infer
(in fər')

(*v.*) to find out by reasoning; to arrive at a conclusion on the basis of thought; to hint, suggest, imply

I can _____ nothing from his odd behavior.
SYNONYMS: gather, deduce, presume, guess, speculate

9. inscrutable
(in skrü' tə bəl)

(*adj.*) incapable of being understood; impossible to see through physically

I could not tell by her _____ smile whether she was pleased or only amused with me.

SYNONYMS: impenetrable, incomprehensible, enigmatic
ANTONYMS: comprehensible, intelligible, penetrable

10. insular
(in' syə lər)

(*adj.*) relating to, characteristic of, or situated on an island; narrow or isolated in outlook or experience

You seem too sophisticated to hold such _____ opinions.

SYNONYMS: narrow-minded, parochial, provincial
ANTONYMS: catholic, cosmopolitan, liberal

11. irrevocable
(i rev' ə kə bəl)

(*adj.*) incapable of being changed or called back
We tend to think of court verdicts as _____ but they are often overturned by higher courts.

SYNONYMS: irreversible, unrecalable, unalterable
ANTONYMS: reversible, changeable

12. propensity
(prə pen' sə tē)

(*n.*) a natural inclination or predilection toward
Queen Elizabeth I showed a strong _____ for putting off decisions in the hopes that they would resolve themselves.

SYNONYMS: natural bent, proclivity, penchant
ANTONYMS: natural incapacity or inability

13. querulous
(kwər' ə ləs)

(*adj.*) peevish, complaining, fretful
Some flight attendants dread a _____ airline passenger more than they do rough weather.

SYNONYMS: petulant, touchy, cranky, irritable
ANTONYMS: uncomplaining, stoical, serene, placid

14. remonstrate
(ri mən' strät)

(*v.*) to argue or plead with someone against something, protest against, object to

Slowly, carefully, keeping his voice down, he argued with the caller as one might _____ with a child.

SYNONYMS: reason against, expostulate

15. repudiate
(ri pyü' də ät)

(*v.*) to disown, reject, or deny the validity of

He was forced to _____ a statement he had made before he'd had all the information.

SYNONYMS: disavow, abjure, renounce
ANTONYMS: avow, affirm, aver, avouch

16. resilient
(ri zil' yənt)

(*adj.*) able to return to an original shape or form; able to recover quickly

The development of lightweight _____ plastics revolutionized the design of many durable goods.

SYNONYMS: springy, elastic, buoyant, bouncy
ANTONYMS: rigid, stiff, inflexible, unyielding

17. reverberate
(ri vər' bə rät)

(*v.*) to re-echo, resound; to reflect or be reflected repeatedly

From the construction site, the noise of bulldozers and dump trucks _____ across the valley.
SYNONYMS: rumble, thunder, boom, echo

18. scurrilous
(skər' ə ləs)

(*adj.*) coarsely abusive, vulgar or low (especially in language); foul-mouthed

Days passed and unrest grew, and soon the rebels began a _____ attack on their absent leader.

SYNONYMS: obscene, filthy, abusive, vituperative
ANTONYMS: decorous, seemly, tasteful, dignified

19. sedulous
(sej' ə ləs)

(*adj.*) persistent, showing industry and determination

No one could say that he was lazy, for he was a careful, _____ copier of other people's work.

SYNONYMS: assiduous, tireless, indefatigable
ANTONYMS: lackadaisical, listless, indolent, otiose

20. sleazy
(sle' zē)

(*adj.*) thin or flimsy in texture; cheap; shoddy or inferior in quality or character; ethically low, mean, or disreputable

The old lady made her clothes at home in order to avoid the _____ goods sold in the general store.

SYNONYMS: inferior, cheesy, lardry, tatty
ANTONYMS: superior, first-rate, quality, sturdy

Completing the Sentence

From the words for this unit, choose the one that best completes each of the following sentences. Write the word in the space provided.

- The program he suggested was so barren of guiding ideas and specific proposals that I felt justified in referring to it as _____.
- This jacket is made of a material so _____ that it sheds wrinkles and keeps its shape even when one has worn it for days.
- Under the latest regulations, any shipment of arms to those countries is illegal and may be seized as _____.
- His attempts to discredit her by belittling her ability and character were nothing more than _____ abuse.
- The commitment you have made is _____ without the consent of the other party to the agreement.
- The sharp crack of the rifle shot _____ through the hills.
- On his combat uniform he wore absolutely no insignia of rank, but he was surrounded with an unmistakable _____ of authority.
- He used his admittedly remarkable talents only to _____ himself, not to benefit the society that was so kind to him.
- I am not going to _____ the ideas and standards by which I have guided my life just because they have become unpopular.
- As my opponent cited facts and figures without once referring to notes, I became aware of how _____ she was.
- The drops of dew sparkled like diamonds on the _____ threads of the spider web.
- Since our efforts to _____ with the factory managers about pollution of the lake have been ineffective, we are now considering legal action.
- He is really insufferable when he gets into one of those _____ moods in which nothing in the world pleases him.
- If you happen to have a(n) _____ seatmate on a long airplane flight, you may find yourself talking more freely about personal matters than you would under other circumstances.
- He tried in vain to guess what surprise he might expect next from that _____ power, Lady Luck.
- Am I to _____ from what you just said that you were not present at the scene of the accident?
- While tsarist Russia's vast territories were almost purely continental, the British Empire included numerous _____ possessions.

18. Because of his _____ for gossiping, we tried not to let him learn anything about our personal affairs.

19. _____ dives full of disreputable and dangerous-looking characters have given the waterfront areas of many cities a bad reputation.

20. Perhaps she had less native ability than some of her classmates, but her powers of concentration and _____ study program enabled her to finish first in the class.

Synonyms

Choose the word from this unit that is **the same or most nearly the same** in meaning as the **boldface** word or expression in the given phrase. Write the word on the line provided.

- expostulate** with a noisy neighbor _____
- had a festive **ambience** _____
- said her decision was **irreversible** _____
- resound** from wall to wall _____
- answer with an **enigmatic** smile _____
- only a **nebulous** idea of his future _____
- disavow** an earlier promise _____
- a relaxed, **agreeable** companion _____
- to **surmise** from her expression _____
- scholarly** study of the topic _____
- a **tawdry** appearance _____
- prevailed due to **assiduous** preparation _____
- springy** as a trampoline _____
- smuggling **illicit** drugs _____

Antonyms

Choose the word from this unit that is **most nearly opposite** in meaning to the **boldface** word or expression in the given phrase. Write the word on the line provided.

- a **serene** little boy of four _____
- a **cosmopolitan** awareness of culture _____
- a **tasteful** account of her private life _____
- his **natural incapacity** for meanness _____
- a **thick** morning mist on the garden _____

Choosing the Right Word

Circle the **boldface** word that more satisfactorily completes each of the following sentences.

- The musical composition, with no melodic pattern and no well-defined structure of development, seemed (**amorphous**, **querulous**) to my ear.
- The minister said that Cain's question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" has continued to (**reverb**ate, **infer**) through the ages.
- What we really resent is not sensible criticism but nagging that is petty, capricious, and (**querulous**, **affable**).
- Since he seems to have no moral standards whatsoever, it would probably be futile to (**infer**, **remonstrate**) with him about his outrageous behavior.
- The language he used in his bitter attack on us was so (**amorphous**, **scurrilous**) that I hesitate even to repeat it.
- What a pleasure to talk about old times with so (**affable**, **erudite**) a companion!
- The pitiful derelict's only protection against the elements was a cheap overcoat made out of some kind of (**resilient**, **sleazy**) material that wouldn't keep the cold out in a heat wave.
- I think that nothing in Shakespeare is lighter or more delightful than the (**gossamer**, **aggrandized**) wit and fancy of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
- I tried to make some sense out of the strange orders he had given us, but his plan and purpose remained utterly (**erudite**, **inscrutable**).
- Your (**propensity**, **repudiation**) for spending more than you can afford will lead to only one result—bankruptcy!
- Throughout his career, the man has emphasized the (**aggrandizement**, **inscrutability**) of wealth and power at the expense of other values.
- Am I to (**remonstrate**, **infer**) from your statement that there would be no point in further negotiations?
- Lucy finally completed her (**querulous**, **erudite**) term paper, in which she quoted from more than a hundred sources.
- Carefully avoiding any attempt at originality, he has fashioned his style on (**sedulous**, **scurrilous**) mimicry of other, more talented writers.
- On the Sabbath, the entire village is immersed in a(n) (**propensity**, **aura**) of religious devotion that is difficult to convey to outsiders.
- When we arrived home we were tired and depressed, but the (**gossamer**, **resilient**) spirit of youth made things look brighter the next morning.
- Our determination never to yield to force or the threat of force is firm and (**amorphous**, **irrevocable**)!
- We cannot bar foreign influences from our shores, and we cannot treat unfamiliar ideas as (**aura**, **contraband**)!
- To limit the free expression of unpopular ideas is to (**repudiate**, **infer**) the basic spirit of the Bill of Rights.
- In an age when the world has become a "global village," we cannot afford leaders with (**insular**, **sedulous**) outlooks.

Vocabulary in Context

Read the following passage, in which some of the words you have studied in this unit appear in **boldface** type. Then complete each statement given below the passage by circling the letter of the item that is the same or almost the same in meaning as the highlighted word.

Fast Talk

Slang is a set of informal words or phrases used mainly for speaking rather than writing. Some slang terms are original and unique, while others are given the meaning of a word that already exists. Either way the chief point of slang is to amuse one's listeners with something new, odd, or clever.

Slang perseveres because it makes us feel **affable** and at home. In its **aura** we know we belong to some group, large or small, that understands it. (In this way, **scurrilous** slang works all too well.) Those outside the

group may regard such talk as a form of **contraband** language, a somewhat snobbish secret code. Still

others become bored by it, for it lives by constant use, like other habits.

Oddly enough, most slang words are not **resilient**. They change their meaning or go stale and are quietly forgotten. Above all,

slang is a game that anyone can play at any time. For instance, *Money* has coined countless slang terms at various times, such as *lettuce*, *cabbage*, and *bread*. One who supports you with money can be called your *meal ticket*.

In England in the 1740s the slang for complete happened to be *cool*. In the 1940s American jazz musicians such as Duke Ellington (right) took up *cool* to mean relaxed, restrained, or not emotional. Since then the word has been used at various times to mean **reverberating** or soft or simply good.

Every language has its slang, some of it unkind, most of it harmless. Not much of it is timeless, however, and some of this year's words will soon be showing their age.



Ellington (1899–1974) at the keyboard.

- The meaning of **affable** (line 5) is
a. amusing
b. careless
c. genial
d. calm
- Aura** (line 5) most nearly means
a. protection
b. atmosphere
c. sound
d. spotlight
- Scurrilous** (line 7) is best defined as
a. abusive
b. old-fashioned
c. mysterious
d. surprising
- The meaning of **contraband** (line 8) is
a. familiar
b. illicit
c. puzzling
d. second
- Resilient** (line 13) most nearly means
a. important
b. likeable
c. good
d. elastic
- Reverberating** (line 26) is best defined as
a. re-echoing
b. repeating
c. replaying
d. listening