



**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. **ameliorate**  
(ə mel' yə rāt)  
(v) to improve, make better, correct a flaw or shortcoming  
A hot meal can \_\_\_\_\_ the discomforts of even the coldest day  
SYNONYMS: amend, better  
ANTONYMS: worsen, aggravate, exacerbate
2. **aplomb**  
(ə plān')  
(n.) poise, assurance, great self-confidence, perpendicularity  
Considering the family's tense mood, you handled the situation with \_\_\_\_\_  
SYNONYMS: composure, self-possession, levelheadedness  
ANTONYMS: confusion, embarrassment, abashment
3. **bombastic**  
(bām bas' tik)  
(adj) pompous or overblown in language, full of high-sounding words intended to conceal a lack of ideas  
He delivered a \_\_\_\_\_ speech that did not even address our problems  
SYNONYMS: inflated, highfalutin, high-flown, pretentious  
ANTONYMS: unadorned, simple, plain, austere
4. **callow**  
(kāl' ō)  
(adj) without experience, immature, not fully developed; lacking sophistication and poise; without feathers  
They entered the army as \_\_\_\_\_ recruits and left as seasoned veterans.  
SYNONYMS: green, raw, unledged, inexperienced  
ANTONYMS: mature, grown-up, polished, sophisticated
5. **drivel**  
(dri' vəl)  
(n.) saliva or mucus flowing from the mouth or nose; foolish, aimless talk or thinking; nonsense; (v) to let saliva flow from the mouth; to utter nonsense or childish twaddle; to waste or fritter away foolishly  
To me, my dream made perfect sense, but when I told it to my friend it sounded like \_\_\_\_\_  
Knowing that his time was nearly up, we kept silent and let him \_\_\_\_\_ on.  
SYNONYMS (n) balderdash, hogwash, tommyrot, (v) slaver
6. **epitome**  
(i pit' ə me)  
(n) a summary, condensed account; an instance that represents a larger reality  
Admitting when you have been fairly defeated is the \_\_\_\_\_ of sportsmanship.  
SYNONYMS: abstract, digest, model, archetype

**7. exhort**  
(eg zōrt')

(v) to urge strongly, advise earnestly  
With dramatic gestures, our fans vigorously \_\_\_\_\_ the team to play harder.  
SYNONYMS: entreat, implore, adjure  
ANTONYMS: discourage, advise against, deprecate

**8. ex officio**  
(eks ə fish' ē ō)

(adj, adv) by virtue of holding a certain office  
The President is the \_\_\_\_\_ commander-in-chief of the armed forces in time of war

**9. infringe**  
(in frinj')

(v) to violate, trespass, go beyond recognized bounds  
If you continue to \_\_\_\_\_ on my responsibilities, will you also take the blame for any mistakes?  
SYNONYMS: encroach, impinge, intrude, poach  
ANTONYM: stay in bounds

**10. ingratiate**  
(in gra' she at)

(v) to make oneself agreeable and thus gain favor or acceptance by others (sometimes used in a critical or derogatory sense)  
It is not a good idea to \_\_\_\_\_ oneself by paying cloying compliments.  
SYNONYMS: cozy up to, curry favor with  
ANTONYMS: alienate, humiliate oneself, mortify oneself

**11. interloper**  
(in' tar lōp ə r)

(n) one who moves in where he or she is not wanted or has no right to be, an intruder  
The crowd was so eager to see the band perform that they resented the opening singer as an \_\_\_\_\_  
SYNONYMS: trespasser, meddler, buttnsky

**12. intrinsic**  
(in trin' sik)

(adj) belonging to someone or something by its very nature, essential, inherent; originating in a bodily organ or part  
It had been my father's favorite book when he was my age, but for me it held little \_\_\_\_\_ interest.  
SYNONYMS: immanent, organic  
ANTONYMS: extrinsic, external, outward

**13. inveigh**  
(in vā')

(v) to make a violent attack in words, express strong disapproval  
You should not \_\_\_\_\_ against the plan with quite so much vigor until you have read it.  
SYNONYMS: rail, harangue, fulminate, remonstrate  
ANTONYMS: acclaim, glorify, extol

**14. lassitude**  
(las' ə tūd)

(n) weariness of body or mind, lack of energy  
On some days I am overcome by \_\_\_\_\_ at the thought of so many more years of schooling  
SYNONYMS: fatigue, lethargy, torpor, languor  
ANTONYMS: energy, vitality, animation, liveliness

**15. millennium**  
(pl., millennia)  
(ma len' ē am)

(n) a period of one thousand years; a period of great joy  
In 1999 an argument raged over whether 2000 or 2001 would mark the beginning of the new \_\_\_\_\_  
SYNONYMS: chiliad, golden age, prosperity, peace  
ANTONYMS: doomsday, day of judgment

**16. occult**  
(ə kal't)

(adj.) mysterious, magical, supernatural, secret, hidden from view; not detectable by ordinary means; (v) to hide; conceal;  
eclipse; (n) matters involving the supernatural  
One need not rely on \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge to grasp why things disappear in a house where two cats live  
Much of his talk about the \_\_\_\_\_ seems grounded in nothing but trick photography and folklore  
SYNONYMS: (adj.) supernatural, esoteric, abstruse, arcane  
ANTONYMS: (adj.) mundane, common, public, exoteric

**17. permeate**  
(pə' mē at)

(v) to spread through, penetrate, soak through  
The rain \_\_\_\_\_ all of my clothing and reduced the map in my pocket to a pulpy mass.

**18. precipitate**  
(v., pri' sip' ə lat; adj., n., pri' sip' ət at)

(v) to fall as moisture; to cause or bring about suddenly; to hurt down from a great height; to give distinct form to; (adj.) characterized by excessive haste; (n) moisture; the product of an action or process  
Scholars often disagree over which event or events \_\_\_\_\_ an historic moment.  
I admit that my outburst was \_\_\_\_\_

**19. stringent**  
(strin' jan)

Too many eggs in this particular pudding will leave a messy \_\_\_\_\_ in the baking pan.  
SYNONYMS: (v) provoke, produce; (adj.) reckless, impetuous  
ANTONYMS: (adj.) wary, cautious, circumspect  
(adj.) strict, severe; rigorously or urgently binding or compelling; sharp or bitter to the taste  
Some argue that more \_\_\_\_\_ laws against speeding will make our streets safer  
SYNONYMS: stern, rigorous, tough, urgent, imperative  
ANTONYMS: lenient, mild, lax, permissive

**20. surmise**  
(sər' mīz')

(v) to think or believe without certain supporting evidence; to conjecture or guess; (n) likely idea that lacks definite proof  
I cannot be sure, but I \_\_\_\_\_ that she would not accept my apology even if I made it on my knees.  
The police had no proof; nothing to go on but a suspicion, a mere \_\_\_\_\_  
SYNONYMS: (v) infer, gather; (n) inference, presumption

### 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.

1. They have a great deal to say on the subject, but unfortunately most of it is meaningless. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The Vice President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense are \_\_\_\_\_ members of the National Security Council
3. That dancer is very talented, but isn't it going rather far to call her "the very \_\_\_\_\_ of feminine beauty and grace"?
4. Representing an organization of senior citizens, the rally's keynote speaker \_\_\_\_\_ vehemently against conditions that rob the elderly of their dignity and independence.
5. "The rash and \_\_\_\_\_ actions of that young hotthead almost cost us the battle; to say nothing of the war," the general remarked sourly.
6. The mere fact that we cannot explain at the present time how she was hurt doesn't mean that she was the victim of some \_\_\_\_\_ power.
7. After completing those long, grueling exams, I was overwhelmed by a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ so great that I felt I would never be able to study again.
8. We do not know what her motives were, but we may \_\_\_\_\_ that she was mainly concerned for the child's well-being.
9. A good definition of freedom is: "The right to do anything you wish as long as you do not \_\_\_\_\_ on the rights of others."
10. Addressing the school assembly for the first time was a nerve-racking experience, but I managed to deliver my speech with a reasonable amount of \_\_\_\_\_ and composure.
11. "If you think my training rules are too \_\_\_\_\_ and confining," the coach said, "then you probably shouldn't be a candidate for the team."
12. We looked up hungrily as the delightful odor of broiled steak and fried onions \_\_\_\_\_ the room.
13. He tries to give the impression of being a true man of the world, but his conduct clearly shows him to be a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ and somewhat feckless youth.
14. The voters of this city are looking for practical answers to urgent questions and will not respond to that kind of \_\_\_\_\_ and pretentious claptrap.
15. Though fossils show that human beings have been on earth a very, very long time, the earliest written records of their activities date back only about five \_\_\_\_\_.
16. I refuse to accept the idea that conditions in this slum have deteriorated so far that nothing can be done to \_\_\_\_\_ them.
17. How can we have any respect for people who try to \_\_\_\_\_ themselves with their superiors by flattery and favors?

18. This old necklace has little \_\_\_\_\_ value, but it means a great deal to me because it belonged to my mother.
19. The people trying to "crash" our dance may think of themselves as merry pranksters, but they are really \_\_\_\_\_ who would prevent us all from having a good time.
20. The prophets of old fervently \_\_\_\_\_ the people to amend their lives.

**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.

1. a **buttnsky** at their reunion
2. a stain that **spread through**
3. overdramatic, **high-flown** language
4. the **model** of what not to wear
5. a smile meant to **curry favor**
6. to **rail** against a harmless mistake
7. a line delivered with **composure**
8. thought the idea to be **hogwash**
9. a **strict** requirement
10. seemed to be a logical **presumption**
11. to **encroach** on their rights
12. to **entreat** the people to resist
13. an **inexperienced** trainee
14. tonight's moderator **by virtue of her job**
15. hints of a **supernatural** presence

**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.

16. **external** to the whole plan
17. a notable **energy** in her manner
18. a **cautious** move on the chess board
19. waiting for the **day of judgment**
20. swift action to **worsen** the situation

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

1. I trust that we will have the will to improve what can now be improved and the patience to bear what cannot now be (**ameliorated, surmised**).
2. When the bridge suddenly collapsed in the high winds, the people on it at the time were (**inveighed, precipitated**) to their deaths in the watery abyss below.
3. "Long periods of intense boredom punctuated by short periods of intense fear"—in this famous definition a British general (**epitomized, intringed**) the nature of war.
4. We are all ready and willing to do what must be done, what we need is leadership— not (**exhortation, aplomb**)!
5. Must we continue to listen to all this childish (**lassitude, drive**)!
6. A sour odor of decay, stale air, and generations of living (**permeated, precipitated**) every corner of the old tenement.
7. She handled a potentially embarrassing situation with cool (**drive, aplomb**).
8. His message may seem (**bombastic, callow**), but there is a solid framework of practical ideas underlying the rather pompous language.
9. In this situation we cannot act on the basis of what may be (**surmised, inveighed**), but only in accordance with what is definitely known.
10. "I'm sure your every wish will be granted." "I assured the demanding child, my tongue firmly in my cheek, "when and if the (**exhortation, millennium**) ever comes!"
11. It is easy to (**inveigh, precipitate**) against "dirty politics," but less easy to play a positive role, however small, in the political process.
12. In stating that "All men are created equal and endowed \_\_\_\_\_ with certain inalienable rights," the Declaration of Independence proclaims the (**intrinsic, callow**) value of every human being.
13. After years of fighting for social reforms, she experienced a sort of spiritual (**lassitude, aplomb**) that caused her to withdraw and let other people lead the struggle.
14. Do we need new laws to combat crime, or rather, more (**ingratiating, stringent**) enforcement of the laws we already have?
15. The publisher will take prompt legal action against anyone who (**inveighs, intringes**) on the copyright of this book.
16. I can usually forgive a(n) (**callow, ex officio**) display of feeble jokes and showing off—but not by someone who has passed his 40th birthday!
17. There is evidence that proves that many persons supposed to possess (**occult, stringent**) powers have either been clever frauds or the victims of self-deception.
18. After the unexpected defeat, the members of the team wanted to be alone and regarded anyone who entered the locker room as a(n) (**interloper, lassitude**).
19. The song had a pleasant (**stringent, ingratiating**) melody that gained it quick popularity and then caused it to be forgotten just as quickly.
20. Because I believe in spreading governmental powers among several officials, I am opposed to having the Mayor serve as (**occult, ex officio**) head of the Board of Education.

**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.

**Definitions**

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**Speaking Up**

(Line)

Most people shiver at the prospect of making a speech, of facing a roomful of strangers and trying to persuade or inform them. Here are some tips that can help the inexperienced to do the job with **aplomb**.

First, remember that you and your audience are all in one room together. You are not an **interloper**, and your audience is not the enemy. The truth is that your listeners will probably like you if you appear to like them. Try your best to put *them* at ease, for by doing so, you can **ameliorate** your own discomfort. (5)

How should you begin? Despite what you may have been told, do not start off with a joke. Telling jokes successfully to strangers takes practice and skill. Besides, any joke you have recently heard is likely to be one that your listeners have also heard. In short, do not start by trying to **ingratiate** yourself. Instead, pay the audience the compliment of being yourself. Try to be simple and direct. By all means smile if you say something funny, but bear in mind that only **callow** speakers laugh aloud at their own wit. (10)

Should the speech be written out word for word? If you are to speak for as long as thirty minutes, it probably should. (For so long a speech, keep the sentences fairly short; strings of long ones will end up sounding **bombastic**.) If your time is brief, you may need only notes you can scan as you move from point to point. Either way, rehearse and rehearse—so you can look often at your audience. Nothing will increase your bravery and put *you* more at ease than looking into friendly faces. (15)



A student debater makes a point

**1. abominate**  
 (ə bām' ə nāt)

**2. acculturation**  
 (ə kəl chə rā' shən)

**3. adventitious**  
 (ad ven tish' əs)

**4. ascribe**  
 (ə skrīb')

**5. circuitous**  
 (sər kyú' ə təs)

**6. commiserate**  
 (kə miz' ə rāt)

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|--|--|
| 1. The meaning of <b>aplomb</b> (line 3) is      | 4. The meaning of <b>ingratiate</b> (line 14) is |
| a. assistance                                    | a. curry favor for                               |
| b. poise   | b. disguise                                      |
| c. applause                                      | c. exaggerate                                    |
| d. victory                                       | d. make fun of                                   |
| 2. <b>Interloper</b> (line 5) most nearly means  | 5. <b>Callow</b> (line 18) most nearly means     |
| a. professional                                  | a. pale  |
| b. amateur                                       | b. raw   |
| c. intruder                                      | c. proud   |
| d. fool  | d. loud  |
| 3. <b>Ameliorate</b> (line 7) is best defined as | 6. <b>Bombastic</b> (line 23) is best defined as |
| a. amend   | a. complicated                                   |
| b. wipe out                                      | b. odd   |
| c. increase                                      | c. silly   |
| d. replace                                       | d. highfalutin                                   |