



## Lesson 24 Using Reading Skills

### Learning from Context: Contrasts

A sentence that contains an unfamiliar word may also include a word or phrase that is opposite in meaning to the unfamiliar word. This built-in clue is a context clue called contrast or opposition, and it can take one of three forms: an antonym; the words *not*, *no*, *no one*, *nobody*, or *nothing*; or transitional expressions used to signal contrast, such as *although*, *but*, *however*, *nevertheless*, *rather*, *in contrast*, *still*, *unless*, *despite*, or *rather than*.

**Antonym** Diffident as a child, Diane is now self-confident and outgoing.

*Diffident*, *self-confident*, and *outgoing* are all adjectives modifying Diane. The opposite of *outgoing* and *self-confident* is *shy*. *Diffident* is defined as “shy and timid; lacking in self-confidence.”

**Opposite Words** Ralph’s attempts to calm union members were misunderstood as escalation, not mitigation.

The word *not* and the sentence structure tell you that *mitigation* contrasts with *escalation*. If Ralph attempted to calm or to mitigate the situation, then escalation must be the opposite. Escalation is defined as “the action of increasing or intensifying.”

**Transitional Expressions** In spite of agreeing not to censure their colleague, the committee could not endorse his behavior.

The clues tell you that *censure* and *endorse* are opposites, meaning “to criticize severely; express official disapproval” and “to give approval or support to.”

### EXERCISE

Use context clues to write your own definition of the boldfaced word. Then, check it against the dictionary definition.

- Michelle’s management style made her firm and decisive, rather than **equivocal**.

My definition \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary definition \_\_\_\_\_

- Unwilling to confront the rumors, J.D. seemed more **disposed** to pretend that they did not exist.

My definition \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary definition \_\_\_\_\_

- No one could say that Liam was humble, for his actions and attitudes were often **pretentious**.

My definition \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary definition \_\_\_\_\_

- Although they had once been financially comfortable, when the store closed, the owner’s family became **destitute**.

My definition \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary definition \_\_\_\_\_

- Emboldened** by the success of her short stories, Lydia worked feverishly on her first novel.

My definition \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary definition \_\_\_\_\_

# Vocabulary Power

## Review: Unit 6

### EXERCISE

Circle the letter of the word or phrase that best explains the boldfaced word.

1. If someone's communication style is to use **circumlocutions**, you might expect \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. few direct expressions
  - b. many foreign and technical words
  - c. arguments and accusations
  - d. word images and figures of speech
2. If you try to regain your **equilibrium** after an embarrassing situation, you are trying to recover your \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. sense of humor
  - b. reputation
  - c. sense of values
  - d. balance or poise
3. When someone speaks about the **torrid** days of summer, he or she is referring to \_\_\_\_\_ days.
  - a. final
  - b. intensely hot
  - c. first
  - d. rainy and humid
4. An **agenda** is a useful tool because it \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. keeps people organized and on task
  - b. guarantees freedom
  - c. keeps people honest
  - d. encourages firm decisions
5. A **frivolous** remark is most likely to be \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. hurtful
  - b. sympathetic
  - c. inappropriately silly
  - d. awkward and hypocritical
6. If something is **interspersed**, it is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. arranged in an orderly manner
  - b. distributed at intervals
  - c. lined up in a row
  - d. placed in large clumps
7. A **submerged** rock could be dangerous because it is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. sharp and pointed
  - b. deep
  - c. slippery
  - d. covered from view
8. A **fortuitous** event is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. planned in advance
  - b. accidental
  - c. scheduled randomly
  - d. a bad omen
9. A roller coaster with **momentum** will \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. make it easily over the next hill
  - b. swerve off the track
  - c. stop before the top of the hill
  - d. sit at the station
10. A **vigilant** person would be trusted to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. disrupt others
  - b. watch over someone
  - c. entertain others
  - d. teach someone