

Study the definitions of the words. Then do the exercises that follow.

**congenial**

kən jən' yəl

*adj.* 1. Getting along well with others; affable.

The people in the small town were very **congenial** when the tourist asked many questions.

2. Suited to one's needs or tastes; agreeable.

We found a **congenial** little neighborhood on the south side.



.....  
*Ask your partner who the most congenial student in the class is.*

**decipher**

dē sī' fər

*v.* 1. To convert from a code or secret writing into ordinary language; to decode.

You **decipher** the coded message by replacing numbers with the corresponding letters.

2. To interpret the meaning of something puzzling; to solve.

The writing in these old letters is so faded that it is almost impossible to **decipher** the words.

**dissect**

di sekt'

*v.* 1. To cut into in order to study.

Students taking the biology course **dissect** a dead frog to learn about the internal organs.

2. To study closely; to analyze.

After Coach Willard and the team members had watched the video of last week's game, they **dissected** the plays that had gone wrong.



.....  
*Tell your partner about a book or a movie you dissected so that you could understand it better.*

**enigma**

ə nig' mə

*n.* Anything that is puzzling, mysterious, or hard to figure out.

Even after many studies, the purpose of the huge, complex designs formed in the dirt of the Peruvian desert remains an **enigma**.

**enigmatic** *adj.* (en ig mat' ik) Puzzling; mysterious.

After I heard Lucia's **enigmatic** phone message, I called her immediately to find out what was going on.

**ineffectual**

in ə fek' chōō əl

*adj.* Not bringing about the desired result; futile.

My attempt to grow tomato plants from seed has been **ineffectual**, with most withering before they sprout leaves.



.....  
*Discuss with your partner what you can do if your efforts to improve your grades are ineffectual.*

**infallible**  
in fal' ə bəl

*adj.* 1. Incapable of making an error; never wrong.  
The dictionary is an **infallible** resource for checking word spellings and meanings.  
2. Unlikely to fail or go wrong.  
Baking a big batch of brownies was Grandmother's **infallible** method of cheering us up.

**irrepressible**  
ir i pres' ə bəl

*adj.* Incapable of being controlled or held back.  
Charlie's **irrepressible** sense of humor helps make history class fun.

**luminous**  
lōō' mə nəs

*adj.* 1. Giving off light.  
Do you have a watch with a **luminous** face that you can bring on our camping trip?  
2. Clear; easy to understand.  
Jennie's history teacher praised her **luminous** prose in her research paper.



.....  
*Ask your partner how many luminous screens he or she brought to school today (for example, a cell phone or watch).*

**millennium**  
mi len' ē əm

*n.* A period of one thousand years.  
A **millennium** is ten times as long as the one-hundred-year period of a century.

**mire**  
mīr

*n.* An area of wet, swampy ground; deep mud.  
Last night's heavy rains have turned the field into a **mire**, delaying the soccer match for several days.  
*v.* To get stuck as if in a mire; unable to make progress.  
The organizers of the race became **mired** in a bewildering set of rules and regulations.

**pestilence**  
pes' tə ləns

*n.* A rapidly spreading and usually fatal disease.  
The **pestilence** that swept through Europe in the 1300s killed three-quarters of the population.

**stagnate**  
stag' nāt

*v.* To fail to develop, change, or move.  
Students' minds may **stagnate** if they are not challenged.

**stagnant** *adj.* (stag' nənt) Not moving, changing, or developing.  
As we approached the edge of the lake, we found **stagnant**, muddy water instead of the cold clear ripples we had expected.



.....  
*Chat with your partner about why a flower's growth may stagnate during a drought.*

**sublime**  
sə blīm'

*adj.* Great or noble in expression, thought, or manner; splendid.  
Standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon at dawn, we had a **sublime** panorama of the canyon walls changing color in the morning light.



.....  
*Talk to your partner about the most sublime thing you have ever seen or heard.*

**vie** v. To compete for, as in a contest.  
vī By January, the top eight schools in the state **vied** for the debate championship.

**voluminous** *adj.* Having great bulk or volume; ample.  
və lōōm' ə nəs The museum will exhibit a select group of bowls and jugs from its **voluminous** collection of Pueblo pottery.



.....  
*Figure out with your partner some things the school has a voluminous supply of.*

## 14A

### Using Words in Context

Read the following sentences. If the word in bold is used correctly, write C on the line. If the word is used incorrectly, write I on the line.

- (a) The experts cannot explain the **infallible** drop in the amount of snow this year. \_\_\_\_

(b) Self-driving cars must be **infallible** before being allowed on the road. \_\_\_\_

(c) Drawing blood was once regarded as an **infallible** cure for many diseases. \_\_\_\_

(d) It was **infallible** how much my dog loves to play fetch. \_\_\_\_
- (a) Harvest the **enigma** when it's almost ripe. \_\_\_\_

(b) Much of what went on in the boy's tree house was an **enigma** to his parents. \_\_\_\_

(c) The **enigmatic** answer to two plus two is four. \_\_\_\_

(d) The teacher's **enigmatic** lecture left students feeling very unprepared for the test. \_\_\_\_
- (a) The eagle made an **ineffectual** attempt to catch the mouse. \_\_\_\_

(b) Relying on old road maps is an **ineffectual** way to get where you need to go. \_\_\_\_

(c) If what you're doing is **ineffectual**, my advice is to try something else. \_\_\_\_

(d) The signing of the Declaration of Independence was an **ineffectual** date in American history. \_\_\_\_
- (a) The chess player **dissected** every move his opponent made. \_\_\_\_

(b) The science teacher **dissected** the frog while the biology students observed. \_\_\_\_

(c) Three students **dissected** that they wouldn't go to the party. \_\_\_\_

(d) At the ballet recital, the conductor **dissected** her orchestra to begin playing. \_\_\_\_

5. (a) The actor in the movie tried to **decipher** out of the plane with a parachute. \_\_\_\_  
 (b) During the war, code breakers were able to quickly **decipher** enemy messages. \_\_\_\_  
 (c) Karla's poor handwriting makes her letters hard to **decipher**. \_\_\_\_  
 (d) Experts can easily **decipher** the hieroglyphics on the walls of Egyptian tombs. \_\_\_\_
6. (a) People are likely to vote for the candidate who seems most **congenial**. \_\_\_\_  
 (b) Smallpox was once **congenial** but is now under control. \_\_\_\_  
 (c) My friends are a **congenial** bunch, and we all get along really well. \_\_\_\_  
 (d) Going to a **congenial** school makes learning more fun. \_\_\_\_
7. (a) Gravity is the **irrepressible** force that gives the universe its shape. \_\_\_\_  
 (b) The teacher warned Zee several times about her **irrepressible** outbursts. \_\_\_\_  
 (c) My brother's **irrepressible** grin kept us in good humor during the traffic jam. \_\_\_\_  
 (d) The submarine reached the **irrepressible** depth of thirty-five thousand feet. \_\_\_\_
8. (a) A pound of feathers is just as **luminous** as a pound of lead. \_\_\_\_  
 (b) From space, our cities at night look like **luminous** webs or networks. \_\_\_\_  
 (c) The author's **luminous** prose is what first attracted her readers. \_\_\_\_  
 (d) Stars would be as **luminous** as the sun if they were as close to Earth. \_\_\_\_
9. (a) I was warned not to get **mired** in the rules of the game. \_\_\_\_  
 (b) Heavy rain turned the field into an impassable **mire**. \_\_\_\_  
 (c) The thick **mire** made it difficult to see more than twenty yards ahead. \_\_\_\_  
 (d) Wagons became **mired** in the mud and had to be abandoned. \_\_\_\_
10. (a) My dad says too much television will cause my brain to **stagnate**. \_\_\_\_  
 (b) **Stagnant** water is a breeding ground for mosquitoes. \_\_\_\_  
 (c) There are no plans in the government to revive our **stagnant** economy. \_\_\_\_  
 (d) Both sides finally **stagnated** their position, and a compromise was found. \_\_\_\_

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millennium
mire
pestilence
stagnate
sublime
vie
voluminous

## 14B

## Making Connections

Circle the letter next to each correct answer. There may be more than one correct answer.

1. Which word or words go with *plentiful*?  
(a) copious      (b) sublime      (c) voluminous      (d) ample
2. Which word or words go with *compete*?  
(a) furnish      (b) decipher      (c) vie      (d) dissect
3. Which word or words go with *impressive*?  
(a) congenial      (b) sublime      (c) voluminous      (d) awesome
4. Which word or words go with *disease*?  
(a) contagious      (b) epidemic      (c) pestilence      (d) infallible
5. Which word or words go with *many years*?  
(a) millennium      (b) interminable      (c) luminous      (d) imminent
6. Which word or words go with *friendly*?  
(a) stagnant      (b) affable      (c) cordial      (d) congenial
7. Which word or words go with *puzzling*?  
(a) congenial      (b) enigmatic      (c) infallible      (d) ineffectual
8. Which word or words go with *failure*?  
(a) futile      (b) sublime      (c) ineffectual      (d) enigmatic
9. Which word or words go with *bright*?  
(a) affluent      (b) brilliant      (c) luminous      (d) voluminous
10. Which word or words go with *slow moving*?  
(a) sublime      (b) congenial      (c) stagnant      (d) sluggish



# 14C

## Determining Meanings

Circle the letter next to each answer choice that correctly completes the sentence. There may be more than one correct answer.

### 1. We **deciphered**

- (a) the secret messages after studying the code for hours.
- (b) the markings on the cave wall and believe them to be over a thousand years old.
- (c) the chances of winning as no better than one in ten.
- (d) between taking a vacation or using the money to buy a computer.

### 2. An **irrepressible**

- (a) seatbelt held the car seat in place.
- (b) series of letters told the visitors where to go next.
- (c) optimism is Max's most likeable trait.
- (d) curiosity led the scientist to find the cure.

### 3. The **millennium**

- (a) celebration was spectacular.
- (b) was the basic measuring unit in ancient Rome.
- (c) runs for a thousand miles and is visible from space.
- (d) will likely be filled with new technological inventions.

### 4. **Mired**

- (a) in legal problems, Silas was forced to sell his company.
- (b) forward through the water, she swam fast and furious.
- (c) music has a quick beat.
- (d) in deep mud, the vehicles could only churn their wheels.

### 5. The **pestilence**

- (a) known as the plague killed an estimated fifty million people in Europe.
- (b) was believed to be under control soon after it began to spread.
- (c) was carried by fleas that came into Europe on rats aboard ships.
- (d) caused flooding on a large scale in low-lying areas.

### 6. **Stagnant**

- (a) letters to the local newspaper protested the new mall.
- (b) horses are fast, always moving and full of energy.
- (c) pools of water were left behind by the heavy rain.
- (d) growth in employment was reported two years in a row.

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7. **Voluminous**

- (a) behavior during school will not be ignored.
- (b) documents were found at the author's home.
- (c) letters from Civil War soldiers give historians much valuable material.
- (d) layers of clothing were worn by elite ladies in the 1800s.

8. People **vie**

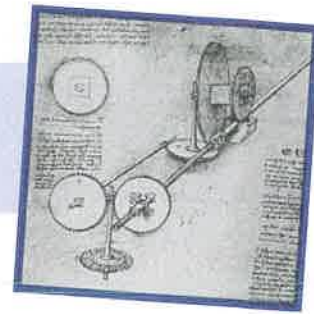
- (a) to become instant millionaires by buying lottery tickets.
- (b) to eat at restaurants when they do not want to cook.
- (c) shooting stars with powerful telescopes.
- (d) with each other to win the best prizes.

14D

Completing Sentences

Complete the sentences to demonstrate your knowledge of the words in bold.

1. A **sublime** trip for me would be  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. I would like a **congenial** friend because  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. I know I would be **ineffectual** if I  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. If someone has an **irrepressible** sense of humor, that means  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. A **voluminous** book would have lots of  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Coaches **dissect** their team's plays because  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Sometimes I get **mired** in  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. I would **stagnate** emotionally if  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. If a word I read is **enigmatic**, I could  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. An **infallible** person is someone who  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Leonardo da Vinci: Renaissance Man

The word *renaissance* means “rebirth.” It is applied to the reawakening of interest in learning and the arts that began in Italy in the fifteenth century. This brought to an end the **millennium** known as the Middle Ages, during which learning and the arts **stagnated**. It is impossible to set precise dates for the Renaissance, but it began to flower around 1450. Its supreme genius is considered by many to be Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1517).

Leonardo was born in the small village of Vinci, near Florence. As a youth, he studied painting and drawing in the workshop of the distinguished teacher Andrea del Verrocchio. His **congenial** disposition soon made him a popular member of Florence’s artistic circles. His extraordinary artistic ability, coupled with an **irrepressible** curiosity about the workings of nature, gave promise of his future greatness. His mind teemed with fresh ideas about music, science, and mathematics, a condition that exemplified the new spirit of the age. Leonardo did not learn from the ancient writings of classical Greece and Rome, which had long been regarded as **infallible** guides to everything from the movements of the heavens to the workings of the human body. Instead, Leonardo learned from the world he saw about him.

In his thirtieth year, Leonardo moved to Milan to serve as a military engineer at the court of Ludovico Sforza. Shortly after his arrival, the city was devastated by the **pestilence** known variously as the Plague or the Black Death. The traditional view was that such events were sent by God to punish the wicked. In contrast, Leonardo’s idea was to clean up the slums in hopes of preventing this tragedy from happening again. He filled his **voluminous** notebooks with designs for many projects, including the layout of towns, the building of churches, and improvements in weapons of war. He even drew up plans for submarines and helicopters. He wrote his notes in a left-handed “mirror script”; the writing can be **deciphered** only by holding it to a mirror and reading its reflection.

Leonardo lived during a turbulent period. At that time, political power rested with individual city-states that **vied** with each other for supremacy. In 1499, the French, allied to the city-state of Venice and backed by Pope Alexander VI, invaded Milan. This ended Sforza’s rule and caused Leonardo to flee the city. Two years before his departure, he had completed his painting

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of the *Last Supper* on a wall of a Milan convent. Most painters of that period applied the paint onto the plaster before it had dried. The technique was known as fresco. It gave a **luminous** quality to the finished work. In contrast, Leonardo painted the *Last Supper* on dry plaster, using paints he had created. The painting began to deteriorate slightly even during Leonardo's lifetime. Yet its dramatic composition and **sublime** spiritual quality have inspired awe in its viewers.

The second great work of art for which Leonardo is renowned is the portrait of a young woman whose **enigmatic** smile has intrigued people for centuries. This painting became known as the *Mona Lisa*. Leonardo painted it in 1503, following his return to Florence. Also dating from this period is a series of precise anatomical drawings made by Leonardo. At that time, knowledge of the workings of the human body was nonexistent. Doctors relied on centuries-old texts to treat disease, making medical treatment largely **ineffectual**. Leonardo obtained corpses from a Florence hospital and **dissected** over thirty of these in order to observe and make a record of their structure.

In 1513, Leonardo moved to Rome to work. However, he often became so **mired** in thinking about and recording the ideas running through his mind that he did not complete very many projects. Francis I, the enlightened young king of France, invited Leonardo to his country. There he remained the king's guest for the last two and a half years of his life. Out of gratitude, Leonardo gave the *Mona Lisa* to the young king. It has remained in France ever since. Each year the painting attracts people from all over the world to view it in Paris's Louvre museum.

► **Answer each of the following questions with a sentence. If a question does not contain a vocabulary word from the lesson's word list, use one in your answer. Use each word only once.**

1. Why wasn't Milan a **congenial** place for Leonardo to be in 1499?

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2. What evidence do we have of Leonardo's wide-ranging interests?

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3. How does the passage indicate that we still do not know the reason for the *Mona Lisa* smile?

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4. What did Leonardo achieve in his painting of the *Last Supper*?

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5. What effect does the fresco technique give to a mural?

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6. Give approximate dates of the **millennium** known as the Middle Ages.

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7. How did scholars **decipher** Leonardo's writings?

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8. How do we know that Sforza's defense of Milan was **ineffectual**?

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9. What is the meaning of **stagnated** as it is used in the passage?

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10. Why was so little known about the human body during Leonardo's time?

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11. Why did the ideas of the Greeks and Romans go unquestioned by most people?

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12. Name one human quality that helped bring about the Renaissance.

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13. How does the passage show that Francis I was not **mired** in the past?

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14. What did people believe was the cause of the Black Death?

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15. How would you describe the relationship between Milan and Venice?

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## Fun & Fascinating **FACTS**

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- The Greek word for “fable” is *ainos*, and because the meaning of a fable has to be figured out, the verb *ainissesthai* came to mean “to speak in a puzzling way.” From the Greek verb came the Latin *aenigma*, “a puzzling speech or riddle.” Finally, the word passed into English as **enigma**, “anything that is puzzling or hard to figure out; a mystery.”

.....

- The Latin for “swamp” is *stagnum* and gives us the verb **stagnate**. The

water in a swamp does not flow; it *stagnates*. The adjective form is *stagnant*. The water in a swamp is *stagnant*.

.....

- **Millennium** comes from the Latin words *mille*, “thousand,” and *annus*, “year.” The plural form is *millennia* or *millenniums*. The Latin *centum*, “one hundred,” gives us *century*, “a period of one hundred years,” and *decem*, “ten,” gives us *decade*, “a period of ten years.”

# 14

## Vocabulary Extension

### **voluminous**

*adjective* Very large in size or volume; taking up a lot of space.



### **Context Clues**

These sentences give clues to the meaning of **voluminous**.

*When spread out, the sleeping bag is **voluminous**, but when it's rolled up, it can be compressed into a very small sack.*

*It would be easy to fit her belongings into the **voluminous** suitcase.*

### **Synonyms and Antonyms**

Synonyms: bulky, large, oversized, sizable

Antonyms: little, puny, small, tiny, undersized

### **Discussion & Writing Prompt**

Why does a dictionary have a **voluminous** amount of information?

2 min.

1. Turn and talk to your partner or group.

Use this space to take notes or draw your ideas.

3 min.

2. Write 2–4 sentences.

Be ready to share what you have written.

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