## Word List

**astute**

*adj.* Wise in a clever or practical way.  
An astute shopper compares prices carefully before making a purchase.

**authentic**

*adj.* Genuine; true.  
An authority on old maps declared that the sixteenth-century chart of the Florida keys is **authentic**.  
**authenticity** *n.* (ô then tis' i tê) The condition of being genuine.  
Lawyers questioned the **authenticity** of the signature on the agreement.  
**authenticate** *v.* To prove that something is genuine.  
Only an art expert can **authenticate** the painting as one by Rubens.

**delicacy**

*n.* 1. A choice item of food.  
Smoked salmon is a **delicacy**.  
2. Great consideration for the feelings of others.  
Discussing her mistake will embarrass her unless you handle the matter with **delicacy**.

**derogatory**

*adj.* Expressing a low opinion; intended to hurt the reputation of a person or thing.  
His habit of making **derogatory** comments about his co-workers made him unpopular.

**devour**

*v.* 1. To eat up hungrily.  
The wolf was about to **devour** Little Red Riding Hood when the woodcutter arrived.  
2. To take in eagerly with the eyes or ears.  
The children **devoured** comic books when they were younger.

**figment**

*n.* Something that is made up in the mind but that has no connection with reality.  
The monster in the closet is a **figment** of the child’s imagination.

**mythical**

*adj.* Imaginary; not real.  
Unicorns are **mythical** creatures.

**plumage**

*n.* A bird’s feathers.  
Parrots have brightly colored **plumage**.
| **predatory** | *adj.* 1. Living by killing and eating other animals. Crocodiles are predatory reptiles. 2. Living by robbing or stealing from others. Predatory bands of pirates once sailed the Mediterranean seeking victims. **predator** *n.* 1. A creature that lives by killing. A sea eagle is a predator that dives for fish. 2. A person who lives by robbing. These gang members are predators who belong in jail. |
| **prior** | *adj.* 1. Coming earlier in time. I was unable to see you this morning because I had a prior appointment. 2. Coming before in order or importance. The court ruled that the Native Americans had a prior claim to the land. |
| **scavenge** | *v.* To search through or pick over, looking for something usable. People with metal detectors scavenge the beach looking for coins. **scavenger** *n.* 1. Someone who scavenges. After the fire, scavengers looked through the debris, hoping to find something of value. 2. An animal that feeds on dead or decaying matter. Vultures, hyenas, and other scavengers are an important part of nature's clean-up crew. |
| **slaughter** | *v.* 1. To kill in order to obtain meat. The hogs are fattened up before they are slaughtered. 2. To kill people or animals in large numbers or in a cruel way. For centuries, whales were slaughtered for their oil and other valuable products. *n.* 1. The killing of an animal for food. The slaughter of beef cattle should be carried out as swiftly and painlessly as possible. 2. The act of killing on a large scale or in a cruel way. Those who drink and drive contribute to the slaughter on the nation's highways. |
| **solitude** | *n.* The condition of being alone or at some distance from people. We enjoyed the solitude of a walk on the deserted beach. |
| **ungainly** | *adj.* Moving in a clumsy or awkward way. Walruses, graceful in the water, are ungainly creatures on land. |
| **vulnerable** | *adj.* Open to attack; easily injured physically or emotionally. Starving people are more vulnerable to disease than those who are well fed. |
Choose two phrases to form a sentence that correctly uses a word from Word List 2. Write each sentence in the space provided.

1. (a) To authenticate is to (c) prove to be a fake. (b) To scavenge is to (d) search for something usable.

2. (a) Plumage is (c) Delicacy is (b) being cut off from society. (d) a bird's feathers.

3. (a) that isn't real. (c) A mythical creature is one (b) An astute creature is one (d) that moves awkwardly.

4. (a) A figment is (c) a choice item of food. (b) A delicacy is (d) an awkward situation.

5. (a) Authenticity is (c) the fear of looking foolish. (b) Solitude is (d) the quality of being genuine.

6. (a) A predator is (c) something that is imagined. (b) a creature that is easily hurt. (d) A figment is

7. (a) A prior commitment (c) is one made in a hurry. (b) is one made earlier. (d) An astute commitment

8. (a) An ungainly person (c) is one who takes from others. (b) A vulnerable person (d) is one who is easily hurt.
9. (a) Slaughter is  (b) Solitude is  
   (c) killing on a large scale.  (d) the condition of being overcrowded.

10. (a) An ungainly person is  (b) one who is surefooted.  
   (c) one who robs others.  (d) A predatory person is

**2B Just the Right Word**

Improve each of the following sentences by crossing out the bold phrase and replacing it with a word (or a form of the word) from Word List 2.

1. People who are **able to use good judgment** are unlikely to be fooled easily.

2. The **killing on a huge scale** of the American bison almost led to its extinction.

3. While at camp, Carlotta **read with great eagerness** the letters from home.

4. **Persons who pick over objects that have been thrown away** are not allowed at the town dump.

5. It's obvious that this coin marked 55 B.C.E. is not **genuine** but must be a fake.

6. There is some unfinished business left over from a **meeting that took place before the present** meeting.

7. I felt very **clumsy and not at all graceful** when asked to dance in public.

8. People who like **the condition of being all alone** make good lighthouse keepers.

9. I try to ignore statements that are **intended to hurt someone's reputation**.

10. The counselor asked questions about the student's family with **much consideration for his feelings**.
Applying Meanings

Circle the letter or letters of each correct answer. A question may have more than one correct answer.

1. Which of the following might be vulnerable?
   (a) a young child             (c) an undefended city
   (b) a wounded animal         (d) a trusting person

2. In which of the following places might you find solitude?
   (a) a busy airport           (c) a log cabin in Alaska
   (b) a crowded theater        (d) an uninhabited island

3. Which of the following can be astute?
   (a) a reply                   (c) a solution
   (b) a person                  (d) an advertisement

4. Which of the following occurred prior to 1990?
   (a) the 2000 Olympics         (c) the 1984 Olympics
   (b) the 2004 World Series     (d) the 1993 Florida hurricane

5. Which of the following are mythical creatures?
   (a) mermaids                  (c) dragons
   (b) unicorns                  (d) dinosaurs

6. Which of the following are predators?
   (a) wolves                    (c) spiders
   (b) gorillas                  (d) sharks

7. Which of the following might be devoured?
   (a) important news            (c) a batch of cookies
   (b) an interesting novel      (d) elevator music

8. Which of the following is a derogatory remark?
   (a) “You’re stupid.”          (c) “You’re a saint.”
   (b) “It’s too expensive.”     (d) “You could do better.”
## Word Study

Each group of four words contains either two synonyms or two antonyms. Circle that pair. Then circle the S if they are synonyms or the A if they are antonyms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. derogatory</th>
<th>ungainly</th>
<th>authentic</th>
<th>fake</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. impartial</td>
<td>mythical</td>
<td>prior</td>
<td>real</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. astute</td>
<td>ungainly</td>
<td>stupid</td>
<td>precise</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. figment</td>
<td>slaughter</td>
<td>killing</td>
<td>solitude</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. irrelevant</td>
<td>earlier</td>
<td>prior</td>
<td>derogatory</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complete the analogies by selecting the pair of words whose relationship most resembles the relationship of the pair in capital letters. Circle the letter of the pair you choose.

6. NIBBLE : DEVOUR ::
   (a) abate : increase  
   (b) lose : scavenge    
   (c) guess : estimate   
   (d) annoy : infuriate  

7. PREDATOR : PREDATORY ::
   (a) author : authentic 
   (b) victim : vulnerable
   (c) precision : precise
   (d) solitude : alone

8. DELICACY : EAT ::
   (a) jewelry : decorate
   (b) beverage : drink   
   (c) food : delicious    
   (d) nose : cold

9. PLUMAGE : BIRD ::
   (a) wheels : car       
   (b) feather : wings    
   (c) water : boat       
   (d) scales : reptile   

10. GRACEFUL : UNGAINLY ::
    (a) slow : slower      
     (b) flattering : derogatory
    (c) mythical : imaginary
    (d) prior : earlier
The Last Dodo

If someone called you a “dodo,” you would probably be insulted. It is a derogatory term that describes someone who is not very astute. The English word comes from the Portuguese douro, which means “a foolish person.” Dodo was the name Portuguese settlers gave to a large bird that inhabited the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. Some people think of the dodo as a mythical creature. It was a real bird, however, and its story is a sad one.

For thousands of years, until the island of Mauritius was discovered by Portuguese sailors in 1507, this odd-looking bird lived in peaceful solitude. Because there were no predatory animals on the island, the dodo had long since lost the ability to fly. And since it had no natural enemies, it was very trusting and made no attempt to flee when approached by humans. Because of this, the Portuguese considered the bird stupid. They gave it the name by which we know it today—the dodo.

Even if it had been less trusting of humans, the dodo would still have been vulnerable. It was too fat and ungainly to run very fast. The settlers on the island found that dodos, although a little tough, were good to eat. They slaughtered them in large numbers. Domesticated animals brought to the island by the settlers added to the dodos’ problems. The female dodo laid a single large white egg, which it deposited on the ground, usually in a tuft of grass. Prior to the arrival of the first settlers, the eggs had lain undisturbed until they hatched. To the dogs that now roamed the island, these eggs were a delicacy; the dogs scavenged the island and devoured any dodo eggs they found. The dodo was last seen alive in 1681. None is believed to have survived after that date.

As time passed, people began to wonder if the dodo had ever existed. Drawings done by artists who had visited Mauritius showed a bird somewhat larger than a swan, with a long neck, a large head, an enormous black bill, and a short, tufty tail. Its plumage was grayish in color over most of its body and white on its breast. Most people who saw these pictures thought that such an odd-looking creature must be a figment of the artist’s imagination; at that time, there was no way of knowing whether they provided an authentic record of an actual creature.
Then, in 1889, a large number of dodo bones were discovered in a swamp on Mauritius. Several skeletons were reconstructed from them and later displayed in museums in London and Paris. They are all that remain of this odd-looking but rather lovable bird.

Answer each of the following questions in the form of 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. What drastic change occurred in the dodos' living conditions in 1507?

2. What is the meaning of prior as it is used in the passage?

3. What was it about the dodo's nature that made it easy to catch?

4. What was it about the dodo's physical condition that made it easy to catch?

5. What other names of birds are derogatory when applied to humans?

6. How was the existence of the dodo authenticated?

7. What did the Portuguese think of the dodo's intelligence?

8. What is the meaning of delicacy as it is used in the passage?
9. What color were the feathers of a dodo?

10. What is the meaning of **devoured** as it is used in the passage?

11. Why did many people believe the dodo to be a **figment** of an artist’s imagination?

12. What did many people come to think about the dodo before the discovery of the bones?

13. What is the meaning of **slaughtered** as it is used in the passage?

14. What is the meaning of **predatory** as it is used in the passage?

15. How would you describe the dogs that lived on the island?
The Latin for feather is pluma. In addition to the word plumage, this Latin root gives us the English word plume, which is a noun, meaning “a large feather or group of feathers,” and a verb, meaning “to smooth its feathers.” (Birds plume themselves with their beaks.) The French word for pen is plume and comes from the same Latin root. Pens were once made from large feathers with the ends split to hold ink.

The Latin solus means “alone” or “without company” and forms the root of a number of English words in addition to solitude. Solitaire is a card game for just one person. Solitary means “alone” or “without company.” Solo means “performed by one person.”