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Recommended for grade 9

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Lesson 5

Word List

Study the definitions of the words below; then do the exercises for the lesson.

callow
adj. Young and inexperienced; immature.
[The student was too callow to know he was being fooled.]

contemporary
n. A person living during the same period as another.
[Martha Jane Canary, known as “Calamity Jane,” and Annie Oakley were contemporaries.]

adj. Existing or occurring at the same time.
[The rise in American power was contemporary with the decline of the British Empire.]

cynical
adj. Doubtful of the sincerity of others’ motives; skeptical.
[People become cynical about diet programs when lost weight is soon regained.]

cynic
n.
[Even though many clients have lied to her, Katharine, a Public Defender, has not become a cynic.]

despot
n. A ruler with absolute power or tyrannical control over a group of people.
[In the late 1970s and early 1980s, thousands fled Haiti seeking refuge from the despot Jean Claude Duvalier.]
despotic
adj.
[The Declaration of Independence of the United States asserts the government’s right to overthrow a despotic ruler.]

tenunciate
v. 1. To pronounce clearly.
[In speech class we learn to enunciate our words.]
2. To state; to announce.
[The president enunciated his objectives for the coming year in his State of the Union address to Congress.]

impediment
n. Anything that gets in the way; an obstacle.
[After the hurricane, fallen trees were impediments to traffic in our neighborhood.]

impoverish
v. 1. To make poor.
[Uncontrolled gambling can impoverish a person.]
2. To take away.
[Continual overfarming impoverishes the soil.]
impoverished
adj.
[The Peace Corps is an agency of the United States government that sends volunteers to improve living standards in impoverished areas of the world.]

indolent
adj. Indulging in ease; avoiding exertion; lazy.
[Being in the torrid heat of the tropical sun makes one feel indolent.]
indolence
n.
[His failure to reach his goal certainly cannot be attributed to indolence.]
sagacious  
adj. Showing sound judgment; wise.
[My grandmother’s sagacious advice has guided me many times over the years.]

sagacity  
n.  
[I was amazed when she questioned the sagacity of my plan to climb the mountain.]

secular  
adj. Worldly; not connected with a church or religion.
[The choir included a few secular songs in the memorial service.]

speculate  
v. 1. To think about or make guesses.
[As we waited, we speculated about whether he’d keep his promise and show up.]
2. To engage in a risky business venture.
[She lost a great deal of money when she speculated in the stock market last year.]

strife  
n. Conflict or struggle.
[The strife between the two families has existed for a few years now.]

venerate  
v. To show great respect for.
[Asian cultures venerate their ancestors long after they have died.]

voracious  
adj. 1. Ravenous; desiring and eating a large amount of food.
[We arrived back from our hike with voracious appetites.]
2. Greatly eager.
[Simon has been a voracious reader since childhood.]

wane  
v. To get smaller, dimmer, or weaker; to near an end.
[When interest in “sitcoms” waned, the television networks switched to detective shows.]

5A Understanding Meanings
Read the sentences in each group below. If a sentence correctly uses the word in boldface, write C on the line of the corresponding number below the group. If a sentence is incorrect, rewrite it so that the vocabulary word in boldface is used correctly.

1. A voracious creature is very hungry.
2. A sagacious person is difficult to rouse to action.
3. A secular group is one concerned primarily with spiritual or religious matters.
4. Strife between people is a condition of tranquility.
5. To speculate is to make a precarious monetary transaction.

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________
6. A *callow* person is someone who is easily frightened.

7. To *venerate* someone is to hold that person in high regard.

8. A *despot* is a person who avoids the company of others.

9. *Indolence* is a state of indecision.

10. To *enunciate* a principle is to express it clearly.

11. *Contemporaries* are people living in the same area of the world.

12. To *wane* is to go from place to place in aimless fashion.

13. An *impediment* is a barrier or obstruction.

14. A *cynic* is a person who is easily deceived.

15. To be *impoverished* is to lack sufficient money for one’s needs.

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5B Using Words

*If the word (or a form of the word) in boldface fits in a sentence in the group below it, write the word in the blank. If the word does not fit, leave the space empty.*

1. *enunciate*
   
   (a) She has yet to _________ the concerns that are motivating her to run for a seat on the School Board.

   (b) The letters were so faded that I could not _________ the message.

   (c) The child _________ her words as she read the poem to the assembly.
2. sagacity
   (a) Pericles, known for his ____________ , made ancient Athens an early center of democracy, art, and literature in the fifth century B.C.
   (b) The ____________ of the tennis net can be corrected simply by tightening it.
   (c) You’ll be able to squeeze into this jacket because of the ____________ of the fabric.

3. wane
   (a) Her strength did not start to ____________ until she was well into her eighties.
   (b) After the moon is full, it begins to ____________.
   (c) His face was so ____________ that I felt something must be the matter with him.

4. callow
   (a) As an intern, I produced ____________ work that always had to be checked by my supervisor.
   (b) Those peaches are still too ____________ to be eaten.
   (c) When I was a ____________ schoolgirl, I didn’t have the courage to speak my mind.

5. impoverish
   (a) The farmers were ____________ by a series of poor harvests.
   (b) Cars and trucks abandoned by the side of the road ____________ the highway.
   (c) Determined that her children not be culturally ____________, she took them frequently to the library.

6. speculate
   (a) I’m not prepared to ____________ about what happened to them after they left here.
   (b) Can you prove that they ____________ with the money entrusted to their safekeeping?
   (c) I ____________ wrongly when I said that Canadian and United States dollars are equal in value.

7. strife
   (a) Our math teacher said that we must ____________ to do better on our next quiz.
   (b) “Jealousy and greed cause much ____________ in the world,” she sighed.
   (c) ____________ between labor and management in the factory resulted in many work stoppages.

8. contemporary
   (a) Advances in biomedical research are ____________ with a growing interest in alternative medicine.
   (b) Sally Ride and Judith Resnik, the first and second women astronauts, were ____________.
   (c) This is just a ____________ arrangement until we come up with something better.
5C Synonyms, Antonyms, Analogies

Each group of four words below contains two words that are either synonyms or antonyms. Circle these two words; then circle the S if they are synonyms, the A if they are antonyms.

1. INCREASE VENERATE
   WANE BEWAIL S A
2. INDOLENT CYNICAL
   SLAGGISH ABSOLUTE S A
3. STRIFE IMPEDIMENT
   HUBBUB OBSTACLE S A
4. TRUSTING SECULAR
   FLAMBOYANT CYNICAL S A
5. SAGACIOUS DESTITUTE
   WRY IMPOVERISHED S A

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

6. STRIFE : RIVALS ::
   (a) admiration : colleagues
   (b) hostility : enemies
   (c) camaraderie : friends
   (d) love : children

7. HUNGRY : VORACIOUS ::
   (a) ubiquitous : rare
   (b) sad : happy
   (c) destitute : lacking
   (d) warm : torrid

8. CALLOW : MATURETITY ::
   (a) sedentary : leisure
   (b) ingenious : wisdom
   (c) laggard : impetus
   (d) uneasy : anxiety

9. SECULAR : STATE ::
   (a) flamboyant : pomp
   (b) wealthy : destitution
   (c) spiritual : church
   (d) physical : strength
10. SAGACITY : MIND ::
   (a) injury : trauma        (c) sound : ear
   (b) stamina : body         (d) idea : brain

5D Images of Words

Circle the letter of each sentence that suggests the numbered boldface vocabulary word. In each group, you may circle more than one letter or none at all.

1. indolence
   (a) We didn’t have to lift a finger the whole time we were there.
   (b) Mr. Badger opened one eye. “Go away,” he said and resumed his nap.
   (c) “Why did you slam that door as you left?” she asked critically.

2. voracious
   (a) “I don’t think you are being truthful,” asserted Isaiah.
   (b) “Take away their plates,” Alice cried, “before they eat them, too!”
   (c) Simone spends all her babysitting money on science fiction.

3. contemporary
   (a) Listening to my friend Jody has taught me a great deal.
   (b) It will be another two years before the bridge is completed.
   (c) He was available to work for only a few months, so he did substitute teaching.

4. venerate
   (a) Many Americans still hold Confederate General Robert E. Lee in high regard.
   (b) The monks bowed low before the massive statue of the reclining Buddha in Bangkok.
   (c) This ring has been in my family for four generations.

5. cynic
   (a) Don’t pay full price for computer parts; I can get them wholesale.
   (b) “You’re so egotistical,” she said. “You think you’re so great!”
   (c) Some people think that politicians care about just one thing: getting reelected.

6. speculate
   (a) Joannie told me she spends twenty dollars a week on lottery tickets.
   (b) In fifty years, gasoline-powered cars will be a thing of the past.
   (c) I expect gold to double in price within two years, so I’m buying it now.

7. despot
   (a) The rule in our house is “If you don’t eat your vegetables, you can’t have any dessert.”
   (b) “Off with his head!” was a frequent order issued by the Queen of Hearts in Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland.
   (c) In the novel, the prince ordered every male in the kingdom to shave off his beard.
8. secular
(a) Dellison is an old private school that has never been related to any religious group.
(b) Those serving on the commission were paid a dollar a year.
(c) She prayed to be reunited with her sister.

9. impediment
(a) The mayor laid the foundation stone of the new hospital.
(b) The crafts fair was held indoors this year because of the bad weather.
(c) Not speaking the language put me at a disadvantage.

10. enunciate
(a) Elocution lessons are intended to sharpen one’s vocal delivery.
(b) Eliza Doolittle, in the musical *My Fair Lady*, learns to speak English with graceful clarity and impeccable grammar.
(c) “He did it!” she cried, pointing at the trembling figure before her.

5E Narrative  
*Read the narrative below; then complete the exercise that follows it.*

**IDEAS THAT ENDURE**

The greatest educators are those whose lessons are still remembered centuries after their deaths. Among this select group, few stand higher than the Chinese sage Confucius. He was the first to enunciate the Golden Rule—treat others as you would have them treat you.

Confucius was born into a noble but impoverished family in 551 B.C. in what is now the province of Shantung. His father died when he was three; as a young man he worked as a herder and storekeeper in order to support himself and his widowed mother. Unable to pay for a formal education, he became a voracious reader whose wide and deep learning soon earned him a formidable reputation as a scholar.

Engaged as a tutor to the sons of the wealthy, he decided to open his own school. A willingness to learn was the only requirement; lack of money was no impediment since Confucius required the wealthier parents to pay for the education of the poorer students. Many of his students went on to hold important government offices, thereby adding to his reputation as a man of learning and moral character, for almost all who knew Confucius extolled his virtues.

An exception to these admirers was Lao-tzu, a man whose writings are second only to those of Confucius in their impact on China. When the two men met, Confucius was in his early thirties, and Lao-tzu was more than fifty years his senior. Confucius was deeply impressed by the older man’s wisdom, but Lao-tzu, venerated as the founder of the religion of Taoism, thought the younger man callow. This
judgment is not surprising, for Lao-tzu’s concerns were spiritual, while Confucius’ thoughts were focused largely on secular matters. For example, Confucius declined to discuss whether the soul survives the death of the body. His position was that since one cannot understand the meaning of life, there is no point in speculating about the mystery of death.

Confucius’ concern had always been with such practical questions as how to achieve good government and how best to conduct relations within the family and between individuals. His answer to both questions was li, translated as “good manners,” which meant that those in authority, whether in government or in the family, must show respect to those beneath them. The ideas of Confucius were particularly appropriate for his time because during that period China lacked a strong central government. Despotic warlords ruled China, and their constant strife and widespread vice brought disorder and misery to the common people. In the words of a contemporary of Confucius, “The world had fallen into decay, and right principles had disappeared.” As a result of his ties with former pupils, Confucius was made a minister of justice in his native province of Lu and, not surprisingly, showed himself to be a wise administrator. As a high official, Confucius was able to practice li and encourage others to do the same. In this way, he helped to restore order in the land, almost eliminated crime, and gave the people of Lu a period of peace.

This happy state was short-lived. The ruler of Lu province grew indolent and began taking advice from those who wanted to return to the old days when there had been more opportunity for personal enrichment by corrupting government officials. Confucius found his influence waning, and after four years in office he was dismissed as a result of the maneuvers of jealous rivals. Now fifty-six, Confucius spent the next thirteen years traveling throughout China, hoping to find a ruler who would accept his guidance. Although he failed in this endeavor, there is no evidence that he ever became cynical. Although Confucius did not put his principles into writing, a group of his followers passed on his teachings. These dealt with codes of conduct based on the belief that strong moral character is the basis of civilization and that inner goodness is reflected in outer behavior. Some three thousand principles of Confucius survived and became the basis of Chinese education for over two thousand years.

In 1949, Mao Tse-tung, the scholarly son of a poor farmer, backed by a strong peasant movement, led the Communist Party to victory in China. The result was a politically unified China and the foundation of the modern Chinese state. The writings of Confucius were banned by the Communists, who insisted that the revolutionary writings and sayings of Chairman Mao provided all the guidance the Chinese people needed. Even so, the sagacious teachings of Confucius continued to influence Chinese thought, as they do to this day.
1. Why was Confucius not able to afford a formal education?

2. What details in the narrative suggest that Confucius was not an *indolent* youth?

3. How did Confucius educate himself?

4. How might following the Golden Rule reduce *strife*?

5. What would be an appropriate description for the person who says that the Golden Rule is “The one with the gold makes the rules”?

6. What evidence do we have that the followers of Confucius *venerated* him?

7. What *impediments* did Confucius have to overcome as a young man?

8. What were some of the differences in point of view between Confucius and Lao-tzu?

9. How do you know that Confucius and Lao-tzu were *contemporaries*?

10. What contributed to Lao-tzu’s impression that Confucius was *callow*?

11. What quality do Confucius and Lao-tzu share?
12. Why was it unlikely that despotic rulers would appoint Confucius to a position of authority?

13. Why do you think interest in Confucius’ teachings has not waned?

WORDLY WISE

The adjectives contemporary and contemporaneous mean the same thing. To say that something is contemporary (without specifying with what) is understood to mean “contemporary with us,” or modern. Thus, contemporary fashions may be contrasted with those of the 1920s.

The Latin dolere means “to feel pain” and forms the root of several English words associated with suffering. In English, dolor means “sorrow” or “grief.” (Many of the works of the American poet Emily Dickenson are filled with a spirit of dolor.) Doleful means “full of pain or sorrow.” (Her doleful expression told me her dog was still missing.)

One of the functions of the prefix in- or im- is to turn a word into its opposite. Indolent once meant “free of pain.” The fact that indolent now means “lazy” or “idle” seems to suggest that activity is painful; however, since most societies believe activity to be a good thing, the word indolent is now considered derogatory.