

INTRODUCTION

UNDERSTANDING NEW WORDS AND THEIR USES

Building Your Vocabulary

One way to build your vocabulary is to learn the different meanings of a single word. Another way is to learn how to make new words by using prefixes and suffixes. A third way is to learn about the origins of words. Learning about the origins of words will help you remember the words' meanings. The following exercises will help you build on, and remember, vocabulary.

HOW TO DO EXERCISE 1

Multimeaning

Words often have more than one meaning. In a Multimeaning exercise, you will read a boldface Vocabulary Word in a sentence. You will then read four more sentences that use the same Vocabulary Word. Your job is to choose the sentence that uses the Vocabulary Word in the same way as it is used in the first sentence. Here is an example of a Multimeaning exercise:

The fog of nineteenth-century London was, in fact, **foul** air caused by pollution.

- (A) Soot from the city's many chimneys would also **foul** the air.
- (B) In this setting, Detective Sherlock Holmes tracks down **foul** murderers and other evil-doers.
- (C) Nothing keeps Holmes from the chase. He goes out into the streets of London even in a thunderstorm or other **foul** weather.
- (D) Waste dumped into London's river Thames had made the waterway **foul**.

In the first sentence, the air was **foul** because of pollution. Pollution makes things dirty or impure. **Foul** is used as an adjective to mean dirty or impure. How does this compare to the uses of the word in choices A, B, C, and D?

- In choice A, **foul** is a verb meaning to pollute or make dirty.
- In choice B, **foul** means evil, not dirty.
- In choice C, **foul** is used to describe weather, and it means unfavorable or stormy.
- In the correct choice, D, **foul** again describes something made dirty or impure.

HOW TO DO EXERCISE 2

Word Analysis

Prefixes and Suffixes

The following items will give you practice in identifying the kinds of prefixes and suffixes that you will run into again and again as you read. In each of these items, you will read two words. Both words will contain the same prefix or suffix. You will be asked to identify the choice that describes the meaning of the prefix or suffix as it is used in both words. Here is an example of a prefix exercise:

readjust rewrite

- (A) after
- (B) with
- (C) before
- (D) again

Hint #1 The second word will usually be a word that you already know well. For example, you probably already know that *rewrite* means “to write again.”

Hint #2 The first word or its root (in this case, *adjust*) is a word you learned in *Making New Words Your Own*. When you remember that *rewrite* means “to write again,” you can guess that *readjust* means “to adjust again.” That leads you to the correct choice, D.

Note: The tables in the front of this book list some common prefixes and suffixes. These tables will help you to complete the exercises on *Prefixes* and *Suffixes* in the lessons that follow.

Word Origins

Many words in the English language come from Greek, Latin, French, and other languages. Word Origins exercises will give you practice in learning the roots of Vocabulary Words. In these exercises, you will be asked to identify the choice that best completes the sentence.

Here is an example of a Word Origins exercise:

debt decrease definite descriptive

The Latin word *crescere*, “to grow,” combined with the prefix *de-*, “away,” gives us the word _____.

Hint #1 Compare the Latin root to the list of words provided above the item. If you remove *de-* from all of the choices, the part of the word left that most resembles the Latin root would be *-crease*, from the word *decrease*.

Hint #2 The choices in Word Origins will be Vocabulary Words you studied in *Making New Words Your Own*. In the introduction to *Making New Words Your Own*, you learned that to decrease means “to grow smaller.” *Decrease* is the correct response.