



disparity
forestall
insidious
insinuate
interrogate

obsequious
omnipotent
opportune
permeate
retribution

Ten Words in Context

In the space provided, write the letter of the meaning closest to that of each **boldfaced** word. Use the context of the sentences to help you figure out each word's meaning.

1 **disparity**
(dĭ-spär'ə-tē)
-noun

___ *Disparity* means

- There's an enormous **disparity** between the multi-million-dollar incomes of top executives and the modest paychecks most people earn.
- Shirley and Jason don't let the **disparity** in their ages weaken their marriage, but Jason's mother isn't happy with a daughter-in-law her own age.

A. a combination. B. a contrast. C. a closeness.

2 **forestall**
(fôr-stôl')
-verb

___ *Forestall* means

- The owners of the failing store hoped that the huge sale would bring in enough cash to **forestall** bankruptcy.
- When the environmentalists were unable to **forestall** the destruction of the forest by legal means, they lay down in front of the developer's bulldozers.

A. to keep from happening. B. to predict. C. to pay for.

3 **insidious**
(ĭn-sĭd'ē-əs)
-adjective

___ *Insidious* means

- Lyme disease is **insidious** because although it is very serious, it starts with a nearly invisible tick bite, and its early symptoms are mild.
- Many people fear that farm chemicals have **insidious** effects. The chemicals don't seem harmful, but cancer rates have started to increase.

A. badly timed. B. subtly harmful. C. all-powerful.

4 **insinuate**
(ĭn-sĭn'yōō-āt')
-verb

___ *Insinuate* means

- He didn't come right out and say it, but Mr. Shriber **insinuated** that someone in the class had gotten hold of the test ahead of time.
- "You always find time to help Sandy with her homework," my sister said to me, as if to **insinuate** that I was flirting with Sandy.

A. to hint. B. to wish. C. to state directly.

5 **interrogate**
(ĭn-tĕr'ə-gāt')
-verb

___ *Interrogate* means

- Before the police **interrogated** the suspect, they informed him of his right not to answer their questions.
- "You never just ask me if I had a nice time with my date," Tyrell complained to his parents. "Instead, you sit me down at the kitchen table and **interrogate** me."

A. to ask questions. B. to delay. C. to abuse.

6 **obsequious**
(ŏb-sē'kwē-əs)
-adjective

___ *Obsequious* means

- Each of the queen's advisers tried to be more **obsequious** than the others, bowing as low as possible and uttering flowery compliments.
- Marge constantly flatters the boss, calls him "sir," and agrees loudly with everything he says. However, her **obsequious** behavior only annoys him.

A. unequal in rank. B. overly eager to please. C. methodical.

7 omnipotent
(öm-nĭp'ə-tənt)
-adjective

___ *Omnipotent* means

- Small children think of their parents as **omnipotent**—able to do anything, control everything, and grant whatever a child might wish for.
- The American government is designed so that no one branch can be **omnipotent**. Congress, the President, and the Supreme Court share power and hold each other in check.

A. totally good. B. willing to serve. C. all-powerful.

8 opportune
(öp'ər-tōön')

-adjective

___ *Opportune* means

- Althea thought that her parents' anniversary would be an **opportune** time to announce her own engagement. They could have a double celebration.
- The job offer came at an especially **opportune** time. I had just decided that I might like to work for a year or so before returning to school.

A. appropriate. B. difficult. C. early.

9 permeate
(pûr'mē-āt')

-verb

___ *Permeate* means

- The strong scent of Kate's perfume soon **permeated** the entire room.
- The weather was so rainy and damp that moisture seemed to **permeate** everything: curtains hung limply, towels wouldn't dry, and windows were fogged over.

A. to harm. B. to penetrate. C. to make unclear.

10 retribution
(rĕ'trə-byōō'shən)

-noun

___ *Retribution* means

- Some "sins" in life have their own built-in **retribution**. For example, if you get drunk, you'll have a hangover; if you overeat, you'll gain weight.
- For much of human history, before science could explain diseases, many people believed that any illness was a **retribution** for immoral behavior.

A. an inequality. B. an obstacle. C. a penalty.

Matching Words with Definitions

Following are definitions of the ten words. Clearly write or print each word next to its definition. The sentences above and on the previous page will help you decide on the meaning of each word.

1. _____ Overly willing to serve, obey, or flatter in order to gain favor
2. _____ To suggest slyly
3. _____ Something given or done as repayment, reward, or (usually) punishment
4. _____ An inequality or difference, as in ages or amounts
5. _____ Working or spreading harmfully but in a manner hard to notice; more harmful than is evident at first
6. _____ To flow or spread throughout (something)
7. _____ Suitable (said of time); well-timed
8. _____ To prevent or hinder by taking action beforehand
9. _____ All-powerful; having unlimited power or authority
10. _____ To question formally and systematically

CAUTION: Do not go any further until you are sure the above answers are correct. Then you can use the definitions to help you in the following practices. Your goal is eventually to know the words well enough so that you don't need to check the definitions at all.