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. **detriment**
   (dë′trə-mənt)
   -noun
   - Detriment means
   A. an aid.  
   B. a discovery.  
   C. a disadvantage.

2. **dexterous**
   (dëks′tər-əs)
   -adjective
   - The juggler was so dexterous that he managed to keep five balls in motion at once.
   - Although he has arthritis in his hands, Phil is very dexterous. For example, he builds detailed model airplanes.
   - Dexterous means
   A. skilled.  
   B. educated.  
   C. awkward.

3. **discretion**
   (dî-skres′shən)
   -noun
   - Ali wasn’t using much discretion when he passed a police car at eighty miles an hour.
   - Small children haven’t yet developed discretion. They ask embarrassing questions like “When will you be dead, Grandpa?”
   - Discretion means
   A. skill.  
   B. good sense.  
   C. courage.

4. **facetious**
   (fa-së′shəs)
   -adjective
   - Dr. Segura has a facetious sign on his office door: “I’d like to help you out. Which way did you come in?”
   - My boss always says, “You don’t have to be crazy to work here, but it helps.” I hope she’s just being facetious.
   - Facetious means
   A. serious.  
   B. dishonest.  
   C. funny.

5. **gregarious**
   (grî-gər′ē-əs)
   -adjective
   - Melissa is so gregarious that she wants to be with other people even when she’s studying.
   - My gregarious brother loves parties, but my shy sister prefers to be alone.
   - Gregarious means
   A. attractive.  
   B. outgoing.  
   C. humorous.

6. **optimum**
   (əp′ta-məm)
   -adjective
   - The road was so icy that the optimum driving speed was only about ten miles an hour.
   - For the weary traveler, optimum hotel accommodations include a quiet room, a comfortable bed, and efficient room service.
   - Optimum means
   A. ideal.  
   B. hopeful.  
   C. questionable.
7 **ostentatious**  
(ōs′ten-tā′shəs)  
-*adjective*

- My show-off aunt has some ostentatious jewelry, such as a gold bracelet that’s so heavy she can hardly lift her arm.
- The lobby of that hotel is ostentatious, with fancy furniture, thick rugs, and tall flower arrangements. The guest rooms upstairs, however, are extremely plain.

_Ostentatious_ means  
A. humble.  
B. showy.  
C. clean.

8 **scrupulous**  
(skrō′pyə-ləs)  
-*adjective*

- The judge was scrupulous about never accepting a bribe or allowing a personal threat to influence his decisions.
- The senator promised to run a scrupulous campaign, but her ads were filled with lies about her opponent’s personal life.

_Scrupulous_ means  
A. ethical.  
B. economical.  
C. unjust.

9 **sensory**  
(sēn′so-rē)  
-*adjective*

- Because our sensory experiences are interrelated, what we taste is greatly influenced by what we smell.
- A person in a flotation tank has almost no sensory stimulation. The tank is dark and soundproof, and the person floats in water at body temperature, unable to see or hear and scarcely able to feel anything.

_Sensory_ means  
A. of the senses.  
B. social.  
C. intellectual.

10 **vicarious**  
(vi-kār′i-əs)  
-*adjective*

- I don’t like to take risks myself, but I love the vicarious thrill of watching death-defying adventures in a movie.
- If you can’t afford to travel, watching videos and visiting tourist websites can give you the vicarious experience of traveling in foreign countries.

_Vicarious_ means  
A. thorough.  
B. indirect.  
C. skillful.

**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. ________________ Humorous; playfully joking
2. ________________ Meant to impress others; flashy
3. ________________ Best possible; most favorable; most desirable
4. ________________ Something that causes damage, harm, or loss
5. ________________ Experienced through the imagination; not experienced directly
6. ________________ Skillful in using the hands or body
7. ________________ Careful about moral standards; conscientious
8. ________________ Sociable; enjoying and seeking the company of others
9. ________________ Good judgment or tact in actions or speaking
10. ________________ Having to do with seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, or smelling

**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.
Sentence Check 1

Using the answer line provided, complete each item below with the correct word from the box. Use each word once.

A. detriment  B. dexterous  C. discretion  D. facetious  E. gregarious
F. optimum  G. ostentatious  H. scrupulous  I. sensory  J. vicarious

1. Any employee who wants to use ___ would simply ignore a piece of spinach on the boss’s front tooth.
2. A weak voice is a serious ___ to a stage actor’s or actress’s career.
3. Playing with blocks and puzzles makes children more ___ with their hands.
4. My roommate used to be ___ , but since he was mugged, he’s begun to avoid people.
5. Lonnie is so ___ about filling out his tax return that he even reported the $12.50 he was paid for jury duty.
6. Jasmine wants to practice her vocabulary skills, so she’s not just being ___ when she uses long words.
7. Do you think a spectator sport gives the fans ___ triumphs and defeats, or real ones?
8. The ___ order in which to answer test questions is from easiest to most difficult, so that you can write the answers you know before time runs out.
9. Wandering through the bee-filled fields of red and yellow flowers was an amazing ___ experience, one that appealed to the eyes, ears, and nose.
10. The performer Oscar Levant had a tendency to cause disasters. He once made the ___ comment, “In my hands, Jell-O is a deadly weapon.”

NOTE: Now check your answers to these items by turning to page 177. Going over the answers carefully will help you prepare for the next two practices, for which answers are not given.

Sentence Check 2

Using the answer lines provided, complete each item below with two words from the box. Use each word once.

1–2. “You have to use ___ in choosing your friends,” my father said. “If your associates are dishonest, people will think that you also may not be ___ .”

3–4. Tyra is being ___ when she says she’s as ___ a dancer as a ballerina. That’s her way of making fun of her own clumsiness.

5–6. When you take vitamins, be sure to take only the recommended dose. Anything more than this ___ amount can be a dangerous ___ to your health.
7–8. My neighbors give a lot of parties, but not because they’re ___. They just want to impress the guests with their ___ home and furnishings.

9–10. Our cousin in Nigeria writes great letters, filled with ___ details that give us a(n) ___ acquaintance with the sights and sounds of an African village.

**Final Check: Apartment Problems**

Here is a final opportunity for you to strengthen your knowledge of the ten words. First read the following selection carefully. Then fill in each blank with a word from the box at the top of the previous page. (Context clues will help you figure out which word goes in which blank.) Use each word once.

Although I’m ordinarily a(n) (1) ____________ person, I’m tempted to move into a cave, far from other people—and landlords. Okay, I admit that I didn’t use enough (2) ____________ in choosing apartments to rent. But does every one of them have to be a (3) ____________ to my health, mental stability, and checkbook?

When I moved into my first apartment, I discovered that the previous tenant had already subleased the place to a very large family—of cockroaches. Although I kept trying, I was never (4) ____________ enough to swat any of them; they were able to dodge all my blows. In time, they became so bold that they paraded across the kitchen floor in the daytime in a(n) (5) ____________ manner meant to impress upon me how useless it was to try to stop them. As soon as I could, I moved out.

My second apartment was a(n) (6) ____________ nightmare—the filth was hard on the eyes and the nose. The place even assaulted the ears, as the walls were as thin as cardboard. My neighbors played music until all hours. Since I was too poor to buy a stereo, I became a dedicated listener. I even attended some of the neighbors’ parties, in a(n) (7) ____________ way—with my ear to the wall. When my landlord found out, he tried to charge me seven dollars a day for entertainment, and he wasn’t being (8) ____________—he meant it. I moved again, hoping to find a decent, (9) ____________ landlord.

I rented my last apartment because it was supposedly located in an area of (10) ____________ safety, considering the rent I can afford. A week after I moved in, I came home to find the locks broken and my belongings all over the floor. On the dresser was an angry note: “What gives you the right to live in such a nice neighborhood and not have anything worth stealing?”

Maybe I should have stayed with the cockroaches. At least they were honest.