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. **charlatan**
   (shār′lə-tan)
   -noun

   Charlatan means

   My grandmother once bought a “magnetic box” from a charlatan who assured her that it would cure her arthritis. Of course, the box was worthless.
   - A. an investor.
   - B. an expert.
   - C. a con artist.

2. **corroborate**
   (kə-rŏb′ə-rāt′)
   -verb

   Corroborate means

   You claim you were at a soccer game when the crime was committed. Can anyone corroborate your story?
   - A. to question.
   - B. to support.
   - C. to understand.

3. **disseminate**
   (dis-sêm′ə-nāt′)
   -verb

   Disseminate means

   Campaign workers went all over the city to disseminate pamphlets and flyers about their candidate.
   - A. to spread.
   - B. to conceal.
   - C. to improve.

4. **diverge**
   (dī-vürj′)
   -verb

   Diverge means

   The brothers’ paths diverged greatly. One became a famous lawyer, and the other ended up in jail for armed robbery.
   - A. to separate.
   - B. to unite.
   - C. to disappear.

5. **dormant**
   (dôr′mant)
   -adjective

   Dormant means

   Many insects lay eggs that remain dormant all winter and do not hatch until spring, in the warmer weather.
   - A. not active.
   - B. irreversible.
   - C. growing.

6. **hoist**
   (hoist)
   -verb

   Hoist means

   Let’s go over to the construction site and watch the crane hoist the beams into place for the new skyscraper.
   - A. to follow.
   - B. to display.
   - C. to raise.
7 illicit (ĭl-lĭsˈĭt) -adjective

- Years of illicit activities resulted in Gene’s being sentenced to serve a life term in prison.
- Ted’s business is illicit: he drives an unlicensed passenger van along a route that’s supposed to be used only by city buses.

Illicit means

A. fake. B. unlawful. C. unprofitable.

8 irrevocable (ĭr-rēˈvə-kə-bal) -adjective

- Layla would like to break off her engagement to Ahmed, but she feels that her promise to marry him is irrevocable.
- Giving a child up for adoption has become a subject of debate. Should the mother be allowed to change her mind, or should her decision be irrevocable?

Irrevocable means

A. not reversible. B. mistaken. C. not certain.

9 precipitate (prē-sipˈtə-tē) -verb

- Mark’s search for a larger house was precipitated by his marriage to a woman with four children.
- The discovery that Elliot had been setting fires precipitated his parents’ decision to send him to a child psychologist.

Precipitate means

A. to bring on. B. to prevent. C. to permit.

10 proliferation (prō-lifˈər-aˈshən) -noun

- Hana’s doctors hope that chemotherapy will halt the proliferation of cancer cells in her body.
- The proliferation of dandelions in my yard is too much for me to handle. They’re growing faster than I can destroy them.

Proliferation means

A. damage. B. a shortage. C. a rapid increase.

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. ________________ Inactive; alive but not actively growing, as if asleep
2. ________________ To spread or scatter widely; distribute
3. ________________ Not able to be canceled or undone; irreversible
4. ________________ A rapid spread or increase
5. ________________ To confirm; strengthen with further evidence; provide proof of
6. ________________ To cause to happen quickly, suddenly, or sooner than expected
7. ________________ To lift, especially with some mechanical means, like a cable
8. ________________ A fake; a person who falsely claims to have some special skill or knowledge
9. ________________ To branch off in different directions from the same starting point; to become different
10. ________________ Illegal

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

A. charlatan  B. corroborate  C. disseminate  D. diverge  E. dormant
F. hoist  G. illicit  H. irrevocable  I. precipitate  J. proliferation

1. Children’s lives often ___ from the paths their parents planned for them.

2. The “natural healer” was a ___. He knew nothing about healing—natural or otherwise.

3. I thought your vow to quit smoking was ___, but you’ve broken it already.

4. When I visited the art museum, my ___ creative instinct awakened. Now I’ve signed up for a course in sculpture.

5. Rafael’s growth of four inches over the summer ___(e)d a shopping trip for new clothes.

6. In our city, the police department has special units to investigate ___ activities such as gambling and drug use.

7. The stone slabs are too heavy for us to move, so we’re bringing in a forklift to ___ them onto the walkway.

8. The environmental group ___(e)d leaflets about the oil spill, describing the damage and urging people to boycott the oil company.

9. I’m afraid I can’t ___ Todd’s claim that he’s never had problems with schoolwork. The fact is that he’s failed several courses.

10. Sadly, the ___ of homeless dogs and cats has become so great that about seventeen million of them are killed in U.S. animal shelters each year.

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.

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

1–2. The map ___s my belief that just before the lake, the highway ___s into two roads, which go off in opposite directions.

3–4. Rocky was briefly involved in a gang. Then his ___ conscience woke up, and he realized he really didn’t want to engage in ___ activities.

5–6. When the movers tried to ___ our piano to a second-floor window, a cable broke, and the piano crashed onto the sidewalk. We know the damage was inadvertent°, but our decision to sue the moving company for negligence is ___.
7–8. Employees were ordered not to ____ any information about the fire at the factory; the news might scare off stockholders and ____ bankruptcy.

9–10. After a retirement community was built in Morristown, there was a ____ of ____s in the area, peddling “miracle” cures for all kinds of ills—some of which were not only useless but actually a detriment to health.

**Final Check: A Get-Rich-Quick Scam**

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.

It’s said that “there’s a sucker born every minute.” In retrospect*, after the events of last summer, I think most of them must live in my hometown, Genville. I, along with nearly everyone else in town, was taken in by a (1)____________________—a swindler who made us believe he could help us get rich overnight.

This con artist, whose name was Chester Turner, supposedly came into town to open a real estate office. After buying up lots of cheap land, he hinted to some of the town’s leading citizens that there would soon be an incredible (2)____________________ of people wanting to buy land in Genville. Naturally, those who received this interesting information promptly (3)____________________ed it throughout town, and soon we were all talking about it. When people questioned Turner about the value of town land, he would hint that there was oil in Genville by asking, “What if there were energy lying (4)____________________ under the ground in the area, just waiting to spurt out?”

An oil find, we all agreed, would (5)____________________ a huge increase in land prices. Our suspicions about oil seemed to be (6)____________________ed by some “oil company executives” overhear talking in the local diner. According to their waitress, they would soon have cranes (7)____________________ the oil derricks so they could begin pumping out millions of gallons of the precious liquid. Soon people were pounding on Turner’s door, begging him to sell them land in Genville.

After Turner left town with our money, we realized that he and his “oil men” had collaborated to swindle us. We began to hear rumors that all of them had been arrested for carrying out (8)____________________ activities in another state. Although we had all been of one mind when Turner was around, our views now (9)____________________d. Most of us just kissed our money goodbye, though we berated ourselves for trusting Turner. Some people, however, clung to the belief that they could somehow get Turner to give their money back. They couldn’t accept the fact that the loss of their money was (10)____________________.