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. **attrition**
   (ə-trishˈən)
   -noun
   - Attrition means
     A. an increase in numbers.  B. a natural loss of individuals.  C. ill health.
   - Sports teams are constantly looking for new talent to replace players lost through attrition—those who retire, quit because of injuries, and so on.
   - Colleges try not to have a high rate of attrition. They want students to stay until graduation, rather than drop out early.

2. **circumvent**
   (sûrˈkəm-vəntˈ)
   -verb
   - Circumvent means
     A. to avoid.  B. to meet head-on.  C. to make smaller.
   - If we take this roundabout route, we can circumvent the rush-hour traffic and get home early.
   - I had to swerve to the right to circumvent a huge pothole.

3. **cohesive**
   (kōˈhe-ətiv)
   -adjective
   - Cohesive means
     A. connected.  B. popular.  C. large.
   - For a cohesive pie dough, one that doesn’t fall apart, be sure to add enough liquid.
   - A family needs to be cohesive—to stay together even when stresses and strains threaten to tear it apart.

4. **grievous**
   (grēˈvəs)
   -adjective
   - Grievous means
     A. preventable.  B. unavoidable.  C. terrible.
   - The death of a beloved pet is a grievous loss for a child.
   - The assassination of a great leader, such as Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr., often does grievous harm to a society.

5. **inundate**
   (inˈən-dətˈ)
   -verb
   - Inundate means
     A. to flood.  B. to strengthen.  C. to go around.
   - During the heavy rains, the river overflowed and inundated the fields, destroying all the crops.
   - After his brief announcement at the beginning of the press conference, the President was inundated with questions from reporters.

6. **oblivious**
   (ə-blivˈəs)
   -adjective
   - Oblivious to means
     A. angry about.  B. not noticing.  C. overwhelmed by.
   - The driver continued into the intersection, apparently oblivious to the fact that the light had turned red.
   - It’s easy to spot two people in love. They are the ones who, oblivious to everyone else present, see only each other.
7 reticent  
(rēt′ĭ-sant) 
-adjective  
- Reticent means  
A. dishonest.  
B. quiet.  
C. unaware.

8 robust  
(rō-būst′)  
-adjective  
- Robust means  
A. very noisy.  
B. sickly.  
C. strong and well.

9 sanction  
(sāngk′shan)  
-verb  
- Sanction means  
A. to grant approval of.  
B. to criticize severely.  
C. to remember.

10 vociferous  
(vŏ-sif′er-əs)  
-adjective  
- Vociferous means  
A. distant.  
B. mild.  
C. loud.

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. __________________ To authorize, allow, or approve
2. __________________ To cover, as by flooding; overwhelm with a large number or amount
3. __________________ To avoid by going around or as if by going around; to escape from, prevent, or stop through cleverness
4. __________________ Quiet or uncommunicative; reluctant to speak out
5. __________________ Healthy and strong; vigorous
6. __________________ Sticking or holding together; unified
7. __________________ Noisy; expressing feelings loudly and intensely
8. __________________ A gradual natural decrease in number; becoming fewer in number
9. __________________ Causing grief or pain; very serious or severe
10. __________________ Unaware; failing to notice

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. attrition  B. circumvent  C. cohesive  D. grievous  E. inundate
F. oblivious  G. reticent  H. robust  I. sanction  J. vociferous

1. The chatty, slow-moving clerk at the checkout counter seemed ___ to the fact that the line of impatient customers was growing longer and longer.

2. A quiet, polite discussion may be better than a(n) ___ argument, but some people get more satisfaction out of yelling and shouting.

3. In many places, the law doesn’t ___ gambling—but the officials don’t do much to stop it, either.

4. A half-hour of aerobic exercise every other day will help you stay ___.

5. People sometimes do odd things to ___ regulations. In New York, when saloons were illegal, one owner called his place “O’Neal’s Balloon.”

6. If you want your essay to be ___ stick to your point.

7. Alzheimer’s disease is a disaster for the patient and a(n) ___ burden for the family.

8. Some days we’re ___(e)d with junk e-mail—it can take an hour to delete all the unwanted messages.

9. The cutting down of the rain forests has caused a dangerous rate of ___ among species that live in those forests.

10. Some people who could benefit from counseling avoid seeing a therapist because they prefer to be ___ about private matters.

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.

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

1-2. Craig is ___(e)d with bills, but he continues to fritter away his money. He’s ___ to his financial problems.

3-4. The company doesn’t ___ the policy of laying off workers. It believes that the optimum way to reduce the staff is by ___ employees who quit or retire simply aren’t replaced.

5-6. Child abuse is a(n) ___ crime, but children are often ___ about it. Their silence may prevent them from collaborating with the police or the courts to bring the abusers to justice.
7–8. Although my brother was ___ enough to meet the army’s standards for enlisting, his eyesight was too poor. He tried to ___ this problem by memorizing the eye chart.

9–10. The teacher of the “Cooking for Health” class was ___ about avoiding egg yolks. “You don’t need yolks for a(n) ___ batter!” he shouted. “The whites will hold it together.”

Final Check: Coco the Gorilla

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.

Illegal killings of gorillas are reducing their numbers far faster than would be expected from normal (1)____________________. Here is the story of one gorilla family.

Carrying spears and knives, hunters entered an African game preserve, where it was unlawful to kill or capture wildlife. When they spotted a young male gorilla, they closed in. Ten adult gorillas, members of a(n) (2)____________________ family group, attempted to shield the infant. The men quickly killed all the adult gorillas. As if (3)____________________ to the infant’s screams, the men strapped his hands and feet to bamboo poles with wire, then carried him down the mountain on which he’d been born.

After several weeks, Dian Fossey, an American studying gorillas in the wild, learned that the young gorilla had been taken to park officials. She found him in a cage so small that he had no room to stand or turn. He was clearly frightened and nearly dead—thirsty, starving, and with infected wounds at his ankles and wrists. Fossey could hardly believe that the officials could (4)____________________ such reprehensible cruelty.

When Fossey demanded an explanation from the park’s chief official, he seemed (5)____________________ about the animal. Finally, however, he admitted that he had made an illicit* deal with a German zoo. In return for a new car, he had arranged for the gorilla’s capture. Fossey was (6)____________________ in insisting that the infant be released into her care. The official agreed on the condition that the infant be shipped to the zoo as soon as his health returned.

For several months, Fossey cared for the infant, now named Coco, who would cling to her for solace*. When he became more (7)____________________, he began to romp and explore. In an effort to (8)____________________ the agreement to send Coco to the zoo, Fossey (9)____________________(e)d government officials with letters, begging them to step in and arrange for him to be returned to the wild. In the end, though, the little gorilla was taken away from her—a(n) (10)____________________ hardship for both of them. Gorillas can live into their 50s, but Coco died in the zoo at the age of 12.