



## Word List

Study the definitions of the words. Then do the exercises that follow.

**astute**  
ə stōōt'*adj.* Wise in a clever or practical way.An **astute** shopper compares prices carefully before making a purchase.**authentic**  
ô then' tik*adj.* Genuine; true.An authority on old maps declared that the sixteenth-century chart of the Florida keys is **authentic**.**authenticity** *n.* (ô then tis' i tē) The condition of being genuine.Lawyers questioned the **authenticity** of the signature on the agreement.**authenticate** *v.* To prove that something is genuine.Only an art expert can **authenticate** the painting as one by Rubens.**delicacy**  
del' i kə sē*n.* 1. A choice item of food.Smoked salmon is a **delicacy**.

2. Great consideration for the feelings of others.

Discussing her mistake will embarrass her unless you handle the matter with **delicacy**.**derogatory**  
də rāg' ə tōr ē*adj.* Expressing a low opinion; intended to hurt the reputation of a person or thing.His habit of making **derogatory** comments about his co-workers made him unpopular.**devour**  
də vour'*v.* 1. To eat up hungrily.The wolf was about to **devour** Little Red Riding Hood when the woodcutter arrived.

2. To take in eagerly with the eyes or ears.

The children **devoured** comic books when they were younger.**figment**  
fig' mēnt*n.* Something that is made up in the mind but that has no connection with reality.The monster in the closet is a **figment** of the child's imagination.**mythical**  
mith' i kəl*adj.* Imaginary; not real.Unicorns are **mythical** creatures.**plumage**  
plōōm' ij*n.* A bird's feathers.Parrots have brightly colored **plumage**.

**predatory**  
pred' ə tōr ē

*adj.* 1. Living by killing and eating other animals.  
Crocodiles are **predatory** reptiles.

2. Living by robbing or stealing from others.

**Predatory** bands of pirates once sailed the Mediterranean seeking victims.

**predator** *n.* 1. A creature that lives by killing.

A sea eagle is a **predator** that dives for fish.

2. A person who lives by robbing.

These gang members are **predators** who belong in jail.

**prior**  
prī' ə r

*adj.* 1. Coming earlier in time.

I was unable to see you this morning because I had a **prior** appointment.

2. Coming before in order or importance.

The court ruled that the Native Americans had a **prior** claim to the land.

**scavenge**  
skav' ə nj

*v.* To search through or pick over, looking for something usable.

People with metal detectors **scavenge** the beach looking for coins.

**scavenger** *n.* 1. Someone who scavenges.

After the fire, **scavengers** looked through the debris, hoping to find something of value.

2. An animal that feeds on dead or decaying matter.

Vultures, hyenas, and other **scavengers** are an important part of nature's clean-up crew.

**slaughter**  
slōt' ə r

*v.* 1. To kill in order to obtain meat.

The hogs are fattened up before they are **slaughtered**.

2. To kill people or animals in large numbers or in a cruel way.

For centuries, whales were **slaughtered** for their oil and other valuable products.

*n.* 1. The killing of an animal for food.

The **slaughter** of beef cattle should be carried out as swiftly and painlessly as possible.

2. The act of killing on a large scale or in a cruel way.

Those who drink and drive contribute to the **slaughter** on the nation's highways.

**solitude**  
sāl' ə tōd

*n.* The condition of being alone or at some distance from people.

We enjoyed the **solitude** of a walk on the deserted beach.

**ungainly**  
un gān' lē

*adj.* Moving in a clumsy or awkward way.

Walrus, graceful in the water, are **ungainly** creatures on land.

**vulnerable**  
vul' nər ə bəl

*adj.* Open to attack; easily injured physically or emotionally.

Starving people are more **vulnerable** to disease than those who are well fed.

Choose two phrases to form a sentence that correctly uses a word from Word List 2. Write each sentence in the space provided.

1. (a) To authenticate is to  
(b) To scavenge is to

- (c) prove to be a fake.  
(d) search for something usable.

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2. (a) Plumage is  
(b) being cut off from society.

- (c) Delicacy is  
(d) a bird's feathers.

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3. (a) that isn't real.  
(b) An astute creature is one

- (c) A mythical creature is one  
(d) that moves awkwardly.

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4. (a) A figment is  
(b) A delicacy is

- (c) a choice item of food.  
(d) an awkward situation.

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5. (a) Authenticity is  
(b) Solitude is

- (c) the fear of looking foolish.  
(d) the quality of being genuine.

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6. (a) A predator is  
(b) a creature that is easily hurt.

- (c) something that is imagined.  
(d) A figment is

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7. (a) A prior commitment  
(b) is one made earlier.

- (c) is one made in a hurry.  
(d) An astute commitment

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8. (a) An ungainly person  
(b) A vulnerable person

- (c) is one who takes from others.  
(d) is one who is easily hurt.

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9. (a) Slaughter is (c) killing on a large scale.  
(b) Solitude is (d) the condition of being overcrowded.
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10. (a) An ungainly person is (c) one who robs others.  
(b) one who is surefooted. (d) A predatory person is
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2B

### Just the Right Word

Improve each of the following sentences by crossing out the bold phrase and replacing it with a word (or a form of the word) from Word List 2.

1. People who are **able to use good judgment** are unlikely to be fooled easily.
2. The **killing on a huge scale** of the American bison almost led to its extinction.
3. While at camp, Carlotta **read with great eagerness** the letters from home.
4. **Persons who pick over objects that have been thrown away** are not allowed at the town dump.
5. It's obvious that this coin marked 55 B.C.E. is not **genuine** but must be a fake.
6. There is some unfinished business left over from a **meeting that took place before the present** meeting.
7. I felt very **clumsy and not at all graceful** when asked to dance in public.
8. People who like **the condition of being all alone** make good lighthouse keepers.
9. I try to ignore statements that are **intended to hurt someone's reputation**.
10. The counselor asked questions about the student's family with **much consideration for his feelings**.

astute  
authentic  
delicacy  
derogatory  
devour  
figment  
mythical  
plumage  
predatory  
prior  
scavenge  
slaughter  
solitude  
ungainly  
vulnerable

Circle the letter or letters of each correct answer. A question may have more than one correct answer.

- Which of the following might be **vulnerable**?
  - a young child
  - a wounded animal
  - an undefended city
  - a trusting person
- In which of the following places might you find **solitude**?
  - a busy airport
  - a crowded theater
  - a log cabin in Alaska
  - an uninhabited island
- Which of the following can be **astute**?
  - a reply
  - a person
  - a solution
  - an advertisement
- Which of the following occurred **prior** to 1990?
  - the 2000 Olympics
  - the 2004 World Series
  - the 1984 Olympics
  - the 1993 Florida hurricane
- Which of the following are **mythical** creatures?
  - mermaids
  - unicorns
  - dragons
  - dinosaurs
- Which of the following are **predators**?
  - wolves
  - gorillas
  - spiders
  - sharks
- Which of the following might be **devoured**?
  - important news
  - an interesting novel
  - a batch of cookies
  - elevator music
- Which of the following is a **derogatory** remark?
  - "You're stupid."
  - "It's too expensive."
  - "You're a saint."
  - "You could do better."

Each group of four words contains either two synonyms or two antonyms. Circle that pair. Then circle the S if they are synonyms or the A if they are antonyms.

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|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|---|---|
| 1. derogatory | ungainly  | authentic | fake       | S | A |
| 2. impartial  | mythical  | prior     | real       | S | A |
| 3. astute     | ungainly  | stupid    | precise    | S | A |
| 4. figment    | slaughter | killing   | solitude   | S | A |
| 5. irrelevant | earlier   | prior     | derogatory | S | A |

Complete the analogies by selecting the pair of words whose relationship most resembles the relationship of the pair in capital letters. Circle the letter of the pair you choose.

6. NIBBLE : DEVOUR ::  
 (a) abate : increase (c) guess : estimate  
 (b) lose : scavenge (d) annoy : infuriate
7. PREDATOR : PREDATORY ::  
 (a) author : authentic (c) precision : precise  
 (b) victim : vulnerable (d) solitude : alone
8. DELICACY : EAT ::  
 (a) jewelry : decorate (c) food : delicious  
 (b) beverage : drink (d) nose : cold
9. PLUMAGE : BIRD ::  
 (a) wheels : car (c) water : boat  
 (b) feather : wings (d) scales : reptile
10. GRACEFUL : UNGAINLY ::  
 (a) slow : slower (c) mythical : imaginary  
 (b) flattering : derogatory (d) prior : earlier

astute  
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 scavenge  
 slaughter  
 solitude  
 ungainly  
 vulnerable



Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow it.

## The Last Dodo



If someone called you a “dodo,” you would probably be insulted. It is a **derogatory** term that describes someone who is not very **astute**. The English word comes from the Portuguese *doudo*, which means “a foolish person.” Dodo was the name Portuguese settlers gave to a large bird that inhabited the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. Some people think of the dodo as a **mythical** creature.

It was a real bird, however, and its story is a sad one.

For thousands of years, until the island of Mauritius was discovered by Portuguese sailors in 1507, this odd-looking bird lived in peaceful **solitude**. Because there were no **predatory** animals on the island, the dodo had long since lost the ability to fly. And since it had no natural enemies, it was very trusting and made no attempt to flee when approached by humans. Because of this, the Portuguese considered the bird stupid. They gave it the name by which we know it today—the dodo.

Even if it had been less trusting of humans, the dodo would still have been **vulnerable**. It was too fat and **ungainly** to run very fast. The settlers on the island found that dodos, although a little tough, were good to eat. They **slaughtered** them in large numbers. Domesticated animals brought to the island by the settlers added to the dodos’ problems. The female dodo laid a single large white egg, which it deposited on the ground, usually in a tuft of grass. **Prior** to the arrival of the first settlers, the eggs had lain undisturbed until they hatched. To the dogs that now roamed the island, these eggs were a **delicacy**; the dogs **scavenged** the island and **devoured** any dodo eggs they found. The dodo was last seen alive in 1681. None is believed to have survived after that date.

As time passed, people began to wonder if the dodo had ever existed. Drawings done by artists who had visited Mauritius showed a bird somewhat larger than a swan, with a long neck, a large head, an enormous black bill, and a short, tufted tail. Its **plumage** was grayish in color over most of its body and white on its breast. Most people who saw these pictures thought that such an odd-looking creature must be a **figment** of the artist’s imagination; at that time, there was no way of knowing whether they provided an **authentic** record of an actual creature.

Then, in 1889, a large number of dodo bones were discovered in a swamp on Mauritius. Several skeletons were reconstructed from them and later displayed in museums in London and Paris. They are all that remain of this odd-looking but rather lovable bird.

► Answer each of the following questions in the form of a sentence. If a question does not contain a vocabulary word from the lesson's word list, use one in your answer. Use each word only once.

1. What drastic change occurred in the dodos' living conditions in 1507?

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2. What is the meaning of **prior** as it is used in the passage?

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3. What was it about the dodo's nature that made it easy to catch?

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4. What was it about the dodo's physical condition that made it easy to catch?

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5. What other names of birds are **derogatory** when applied to humans?

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6. How was the existence of the dodo **authenticated**?

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7. What did the Portuguese think of the dodo's intelligence?

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8. What is the meaning of **delicacy** as it is used in the passage?

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solitude  
ungainly  
vulnerable



9. What color were the feathers of a dodo?

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10. What is the meaning of **devoured** as it is used in the passage?

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11. Why did many people believe the dodo to be a **figment** of an artist's imagination?

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12. What did many people come to think about the dodo before the discovery of the bones?

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13. What is the meaning of **slaughtered** as it is used in the passage?

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14. What is the meaning of **predatory** as it is used in the passage?

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15. How would you describe the dogs that lived on the island?

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## FUN & FASCINATING FACTS

- The Latin for *feather* is *pluma*. In addition to the word **plumage**, this Latin root gives us the English word *plume*, which is a noun, meaning “a large feather or group of feathers,” and a verb, meaning “to smooth its feathers.” (Birds *plume* themselves with their beaks.) The French word for *pen* is *plume* and comes from the same Latin root. Pens were once made from large feathers with the ends split to hold ink.
- The Latin *solus* means “alone” or “without company” and forms the root of a number of English words in addition to **solitude**. *Solitaire* is a card game for just one person. *Solitary* means “alone” or “without company.” *Solo* means “performed by one person.”

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