



Word List

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

congenial
kən jən' yəl

adj. 1. Getting along well with others; affable.
The people in the small Italian town were very **congenial** when the tourist asked many questions.

2. Suited to one's needs or tastes; agreeable.
We found a **congenial** little community right on the beach.

decipher
dē sī' fər

v. 1. To convert from a code or secret writing into ordinary language; to decode.
You **decipher** the coded message by replacing numbers with the corresponding letters.

2. To interpret the meaning of something puzzling; to solve.
The writing in these old letters is so faded that it is almost impossible to **decipher** the words.

dissect
di sekt'

v. 1. To cut into in order to study.
Students taking the biology course **dissect** a dead frog in order to learn about the internal organs.

2. To study closely; to analyze.
After Coach Willard and the team members had watched the video of last week's game, they **dissected** the plays that had gone wrong.

enigma
ə nig' mə

n. Anything that is puzzling, mysterious, or hard to figure out.
Even after many studies, the purpose of the huge, complex designs formed in the dirt of the Peruvian desert remains an **enigma**.

enigmatic *adj.* (en ig mat' ik) Puzzling; mysterious.
After I heard Lucia's **enigmatic** phone message, I called her immediately to find out what was going on.

ineffectual
in ə fek' chō əl

adj. Not bringing about the desired result; futile.
My attempt to grow tomato plants from seed has been **ineffectual**, with most withering before they had sprouted leaves.

infallible
in fal' ə bəl

adj. 1. Incapable of making an error; never wrong.
Peterson's book is an **infallible** guide to the birds of the salt marshes.

2. Unlikely to fail or go wrong.
Rubbing a nettle sting with dock leaves is an **infallible** remedy.

irrepressible
ir i pres' ə bəl

adj. Incapable of being controlled or held back.
Charlie's **irrepressible** sense of humor helps to make history class fun.

luminous
lōō' mə nəs

adj. 1. Giving off light.

Do you have a watch with a **luminous** face that you can bring on our camping trip?

2. Clear; easy to understand.

Jennie's history teacher praised her **luminous** prose in her research paper on the mill girls of Lowell.

millennium
mi len' ē əm

n. A period of one thousand years.

A **millennium** is ten times as long as the one-hundred-year period of a century.

mire
mīr

n. An area of wet, swampy ground; deep mud.

Last night's heavy rains have turned the field into a **mire**, delaying the planting of seed for several days.

v. To get stuck as if in a mire; unable to make progress.

The organizers of the road race became **mired** in a bewildering set of rules and regulations.

pestilence
pes' tə ləns

n. A rapidly spreading and usually fatal disease.

The **pestilence** that swept through Europe in the 1300s killed three-quarters of the population.

stagnate
stag' nāt

v. To fail to develop, change, or move.

Students' minds may **stagnate** if they are not challenged.

stagnant *adj.* (stag' nənt) Not moving, changing, or developing.

As we approached the edge of the lake, we found **stagnant**, muddy water instead of the cold clear ripples we had expected.

sublime
sə blīm'

adj. Great or noble in expression, thought, or manner; splendid.

Standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon at dawn, we had a **sublime** panorama of the canyon walls changing color in the morning light.

vie
vī

v. To compete for, as in a contest.

By January, the top eight schools in the state **vied** for the championship.

voluminous
və lōōm' ə nəs

adj. Having great bulk or volume; ample.

The museum will exhibit a select group of bowls and jugs from its **voluminous** collection of Pueblo pottery.

Choose two phrases to form a sentence that correctly uses a word from Word List 14. Write each sentence in the space provided.

1. (a) is to prefer one's own company. (c) To be congenial
 (b) is to be unable to control oneself. (d) To be irrepressible

2. (a) a swamp. (c) A mire is
 (b) a serious disagreement. (d) A pestilence is

3. (a) A sublime poem (c) is one that is unintentionally humorous.
 (b) An enigmatic poem (d) is one that uplifts and ennobles.

4. (a) give up too easily. (c) fail to change or develop.
 (b) To stagnate is to (d) To vie is to

5. (a) A congenial person is one (c) An enigmatic person is one
 (b) who gets along easily with others. (d) who works tirelessly.

6. (a) To decipher something (c) is to make out what it says.
 (b) To dissect something (d) is to put it back together.

7. (a) one that is extremely lengthy. (c) A voluminous account is
 (b) one that has illustrations. (d) A luminous account is

8. (a) A millennium is (c) A pestilence is
(b) a fatal, rapidly spreading disease. (d) a mass movement of people.
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-

9. (a) one that is difficult to understand. (c) An infallible remedy is
(b) one that always works. (d) An ineffectual remedy is
-
-

10. (a) to cut into it in order to study it. (c) To vie for something is
(b) to obtain it by underhanded means. (d) To dissect something is
-
-

14B

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 14.

congenial
decipher
dissect
enigma
ineffectual
infallible
irrepressible
luminous
millennium
mire
pestilence
stagnate
sublime
vie
voluminous

1. Even though we boarded up the windows before the hurricane to protect them, our efforts were **not successful**.
2. The four students on our science team will **take part in a competition** with other student teams from all over the country.
3. What role Ms. Layton had in the store fire remains an **unclear puzzle that no one has been able to figure out** to this day.
4. Claribel's enthusiasm for skydiving was **too strong for her to keep quiet about**.
5. The **rapidly spreading and usually fatal disease** affected rich and poor alike.
6. When Aunt Anne developed asthma, she moved to Arizona where she found the dry climate more **suitable to her requirements**.

7. The year 2001 marked the beginning of the third **period of one thousand years**.
8. Grandmother's eyes were **bright and seemed to glow with light** as she talked of her son, my father.
9. George felt **unable to proceed in any way while he was involved** in credit card debt.
10. The notes to this edition of Shakespeare's plays are **extensive and take up a lot of space**.

14c

Applying Meanings

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

1. Which of the following can be **luminous**?
(a) the moon (c) a painting
(b) a poem (d) a calamity
2. Which of the following can be **infallible**?
(a) a guide (c) a rock
(b) an injury (d) a remedy
3. Which of the following could be **stagnant**?
(a) water (c) an organization
(b) air (d) a society
4. Which of the following can be **deciphered**?
(a) a message (c) a tool
(b) a word (d) a quarrel
5. For which of the following might people **vie**?
(a) a prize (c) a reward
(b) an advantage (d) a job
6. Which of the following can be **sublime**?
(a) a poem (c) a painting
(b) a laugh (d) a crime

7. Which of the following can be **dissected**?
- (a) a body (c) a report
 (b) a problem (d) a kidney
8. Which of the following can be **irrepressible**?
- (a) joy (c) laughter
 (b) a recluse (d) a wall

14D

Word Study

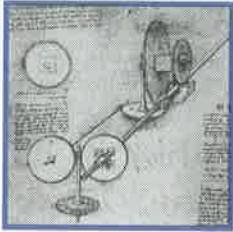
Change each of the nouns into an adjective by changing, adding, or dropping the suffix. Write the word in the space provided. Both forms of all of the words in this exercise are from this or an earlier lesson.

1. malevolence _____
2. innovation _____
3. prestige _____
4. agility _____
5. affluence _____
6. atrocity _____
7. inanity _____
8. tumult _____
9. ardor _____
10. renown _____
11. reticence _____
12. enigma _____

congenial
 decipher
 dissect
 enigma
 ineffectual
 infallible
 irrepressible
 luminous
 millennium
 mire
 pestilence
 stagnate
 sublime
 vie
 voluminous

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

Leonardo da Vinci: Renaissance Man



The word *renaissance* means “rebirth.” It is applied to the reawakening of interest in learning and the arts that began in Italy in the fifteenth century. This brought to an end the **millennium** known as the Middle Ages, during which learning and the arts **stagnated**. It is impossible to set precise dates for the Renaissance, but it began to flower around 1450. Its supreme genius is considered by many to be Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1517).

Leonardo was born in the small village of Vinci, near Florence. As a youth, he studied painting and drawing in the workshop of the distinguished teacher Andrea del Verrocchio. His **congenial** disposition soon made him a popular member of Florence’s artistic circles. His extraordinary artistic ability, coupled with an **irrepressible** curiosity about the workings of nature, gave promise of his future greatness. His mind teemed with fresh ideas about music, science, and mathematics, a condition that exemplified the new spirit of the age. Leonardo did not learn from the ancient writings of classical Greece and Rome. These had long been regarded as **infallible** guides to everything from the movements of the heavens to the workings of the human body. Instead, Leonardo learned from the world he saw about him.

In his thirtieth year, Leonardo moved to Milan to serve as a military engineer at the court of Ludovico Sforza. Shortly after his arrival, the city was devastated by the **pestilence** known variously as the Plague or the Black Death. The traditional view was that such events were sent by God to punish the wicked. In contrast, Leonardo’s idea was to clean up the slums in hopes of preventing this tragedy from happening again. He filled his **voluminous** notebooks with designs for many projects. His plans included the layout of towns, the building of churches, and improvements in weapons of war. He even drew up plans for submarines and helicopters. He wrote his notes in a left-handed “mirror script;” the writing can only be **deciphered** by holding it to a mirror and reading its reflection.

Leonardo lived during a turbulent period. At that time, political power rested with individual city-states that **vied** with each other for supremacy. In 1499, the French, allied to the city-state of Venice and backed by Pope Alexander VI, invaded Milan. This ended Sforza’s rule and caused Leonardo to flee the city. Two years before his departure, he had completed his painting

of the *Last Supper* on a wall of a Milan convent. Most painters of that period applied the paint onto the plaster before it had dried. The technique was known as fresco. It gave a **luminous** quality to the finished work. In contrast, Leonardo painted the *Last Supper* on dry plaster, using paints he had created. The painting began to deteriorate slightly even during Leonardo's lifetime. Yet, its dramatic composition and **sublime** spiritual quality have inspired awe in its viewers.

The second great work of art for which Leonardo is renowned is the portrait of a young woman whose **enigmatic** smile has intrigued people for centuries. This painting became known as the *Mona Lisa*. Leonardo painted it in 1503, following his return to Florence. Also dating from this period is a series of precise anatomical drawings made by Leonardo. At that time, knowledge of the workings of the human body was nonexistent. Doctors relied on centuries-old texts to treat disease, making medical treatment largely **ineffectual**. Leonardo obtained corpses from a Florence hospital and **dissected** over thirty of these in order to observe and make a record of their structure.

In 1513, Leonardo moved to Rome to work. However, he often became so **mired** in thinking about and recording the ideas running through his mind that he did not complete very many projects. Francis I, the enlightened young king of France, invited Leonardo to his country. There he remained the king's guest for the last two and a half years of his life. Out of gratitude, Leonardo gave the *Mona Lisa* to the young king. It has remained in France ever since. Each year the painting attracts people from all over the world to view it in Paris's Louvre museum.

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► 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. Why wasn't Milan a **congenial** place for Leonardo to be in 1499?

2. What evidence do we have of Leonardo's wide-ranging interests?

3. How does the passage indicate that we still do not know the reason for the *Mona Lisa's* smile?

4. What did da Vinci achieve in his painting of the *Last Supper*?

5. What effect does the fresco technique give to a mural?

6. Give approximate dates of the **millennium** known as the Middle Ages.

7. How did scholars **decipher** Leonardo's writings?

8. How do we know that Sforza's defense of Milan was **ineffectual**?

9. What is the meaning of **stagnated** as it is used in the passage?

10. Why was so little known about the human body during Leonardo's time?

11. Why did the ideas of the Greeks and Romans go unquestioned by most people?

12. Name one human quality that helped bring about the Renaissance.

13. How does the passage show that Francis I was not **mired** in the past?

14. What did people believe was the cause of the Black Death?

15. How would you describe the relationship between Milan and Venice?

FUN & FASCINATING FACTS

• The Greek word for “fable” is *ainos*, and since the meaning of a fable has to be figured out, the verb *ainissesthai* came to mean “to speak in a puzzling way.” From the Greek verb came the Latin *aenigma*, “a puzzling speech or riddle.” Finally, the word passed into English as **enigma**, “anything that is puzzling or hard to figure out; a mystery.”

• The Latin for “swamp” is *stagnum* and gives us the verb **stagnate**. The water in a swamp does not flow; it *stagnates*. The adjective form is *stagnant*. The water in a swamp is *stagnant*.

• **Millennium** comes from the Latin words *mille*, “thousand,” and *annus*, “year.” The plural form is *millennia* or *millenniums*. The Latin *centum*, “one hundred,” gives us *century*, “a period of one hundred years,” and *decem*, “ten,” gives us *decade*, “a period of ten years.”

Millennium has a specialized meaning from the Book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible. Reference is made there to the anticipated reign of Christ on earth for a period of one thousand years. Christians refer to this period as “the millennium,” and *millennium* has acquired in this way a secondary meaning, “a hoped for period of joy, peace, prosperity, and justice.”

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