



# Lesson 1

## WORD

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

### **bewail**

bē wāī'

*v.* To express deep regret or sorrow over.

Many football fans **bewailed** the replacement of real grass by AstroTurf when the new stadium was built.

### **destitute**

des'tē tōōt

*adj.* 1. Without resources or possessions, especially the necessities of life.

Winter is especially painful for **destitute** people in the cities of the Northeast.

2. Lacking; devoid of.

Staring at the blank sheet of paper on which I was supposed to write a poem, I found myself **destitute** of ideas.

**destitution** *n.*

**Destitution** caused by the mid-nineteenth-century potato famine forced many Irish families to seek better lives in the United States.

### **detract**

dē trakt'

*v.* To take away, especially from the value, beauty, or importance of.

The addition of a modern family room **detracted** from the cozy style of the bungalow.

**detractor** *n.*

The plan's **detractors** were especially critical of the expected cost of the new town hall.

### **emancipate**

ē man'sa pāt

*v.* To set free from slavery; to liberate.

Some teenagers feel **emancipated** when they get a driver's license.

**emancipation** *n.*

In 1863, Abraham Lincoln's **Emancipation** Proclamation stated that all slaves in the Confederacy were, from then on, free.

### **extol**

ek stōl'

*v.* To praise highly.

The scout leader **extolled** the virtues of truth and honor.

### **flamboyant**

flam buī' ant

*adj.* Excessively showy; unrestrained.

My conservative aunt considered her husband's brightly colored, boldly patterned necktie too **flamboyant** for the governor's reception.

**flamboyance** or **flamboyancy** *n.*

With an air of **flamboyance**, the actor flung out her arm and pointed to the door.

### **impetus**

im'pə tēs

*n.* 1. A driving force; anything that causes an action.

Her hope of winning an athletic scholarship provided the **impetus** for years of grueling training on the swim team.

2. Increased activity resulting from a driving force.

The drop in interest rates gave **impetus** to the real estate market after last year's slump in sales.

**insuperable**  
in su'per a bal  
*adj.* Incapable of being overcome or defeated.  
During my senior year, passing Greek seemed an **insuperable** obstacle to my graduating with my class.

**intermittent**  
in tar mit'nt  
*adj.* Not continuous; happening at intervals.  
Showers were **intermittent** throughout the day, although the forecast had promised sunshine.

**maxim**  
maks'im  
*n.* A general truth or rule of conduct; a short saying.  
Remember the **maxim** "Haste makes waste" and slow down!

**obligatory**  
a blig'a tor'ē  
*adj.* Required or demanded.  
Physical education is **obligatory** unless you have a medical excuse for skipping gym class.

**plumb**  
plum  
*v.* 1. To measure the depth of water.  
The lake was too deep for us to **plumb**.  
2. To reach the deepest part of.  
The bathyscaphe is a vessel designed to **plumb** the oceans of the world.  
3. To understand by examining closely; to solve.  
Her latest book of poems is a valiant attempt to **plumb** the human soul.  
*adj.* Straight up and down; vertical.  
The bricklayer keeps checking to make sure that the wall being built is **plumb**.

**vagabond**  
vag'a bānd  
*n.* A person who wanders from place to place.  
He spent a few years as a **vagabond** before settling in a city and getting a job in a factory.  
*adj.*  
The **vagabond** life of traveling musicians suited the members of the band.

**visage**  
viz'ij  
*n.* A face, especially one that expresses feelings.  
The smiling **visage** of a young girl looked out from the portrait.

**wheedle**  
hwēd'al  
*v.* 1. To coax by using sly persuasion or insincere praise.  
He tried to **wheedle** his father into lending him the new sports car.  
2. To gain by using sly persuasion or insincere praise.  
The agent **wheeled** several thousand dollars from the couple for a life insurance policy that was practically worthless.