

Answer Key

Vocabulary Practice — Set 2

12 Exercises • Complete Solutions with Explanations

January 20, 2026

— EASY EXERCISES —

1 Exercise 1: Definitions — Match the Word

Word Bank A

1. **grudge** — A long-lasting feeling of anger/resentment
2. **lurk** — To wait somewhere secretly
3. **sluggish** — Moving slowly, lacking energy
4. **defiant** — Openly refusing to obey
5. **boggling** — Causing great surprise (mind-boggling)
6. **shrewd** — Clever at understanding/judgement
7. **ambush** — Surprise attack from hiding
8. **acquainted** — Familiar with something/someone

Word Bank B

9. **ponder** — To think carefully and deeply
10. **pester** — To annoy by asking repeatedly
11. **ominous** — Suggesting something bad will happen
12. **divert** — To change direction/distract attention
13. **ample** — Enough or more than enough
14. **sucker** — Gullible person; to trick someone
15. **stunt** — Daring action; OR to prevent growth
16. **outrageous** — Shocking/offensive; OR excessively bold

2 Exercise 2: Synonyms & Antonyms

Part A: Synonyms

1. shrewd — **B) astute** (both mean clever at judgement)
2. sluggish — **C) lethargic** (both mean lacking energy)
3. ample — **C) abundant** (both mean plentiful)
4. defiant — **B) rebellious** (both mean refusing to obey)
5. ponder — **B) contemplate** (both mean to think deeply)
6. ominous — **C) threatening** (both suggest danger/bad outcomes)
7. lurk — **B) skulk** (both mean to wait/move secretly)
8. outrageous — **C) scandalous** (both mean shocking)

Part B: Antonyms

9. sluggish — **B) brisk** (slow vs. quick/energetic)
10. ample — **C) scarce** (plentiful vs. lacking)
11. defiant — **C) compliant** (rebellious vs. obedient)
12. shrewd — **C) gullible** (clever vs. easily fooled)
13. ominous — **C) auspicious** (threatening vs. promising good)
14. acquainted — **C) unfamiliar** (knowing vs. not knowing)

3 Exercise 3: Word Forms — Complete the Table

- (1) **pondering** / **ponderation** (noun forms)
- (2) **divert**
- (3) **defiant**
- (4) **shrewdly**
- (5) **sluggish**
- (6) **acquaintance**
- (7) **ambush**
- (8) **grudging**
- (9) **outrageous**
- (10) **pest** / **pestering** (noun forms)

— MEDIUM EXERCISES —

4 Exercise 4: Fill in the Blanks — Context Sentences

1. The mind-**boggling** complexity...
2. ...I felt heavy and **sluggish**...
3. A crocodile was **lurking**...
4. ...set up an **ambush**...
5. As a **shrewd** businesswoman...
6. ...remained **defiant** and refused...
7. She's held a **grudge**...
8. ...become fully **acquainted**...
9. ...time to **ponder** over...
10. Please stop **pestering** me...
11. ...an **ominous** atmosphere...
12. ...tried to **divert** public attention...
13. There is **ample** parking space...
14. The con artist **suckered** him...
15. ...can **stunt** a person's physical development.
16. ...prices are absolutely **outrageous**!

5 Exercise 5: Collocations — Choose the Best Match

1. mind-B) **boggling**
2. bear/hold/harbour a A) **grudge**
3. C) **lurk** in the shadows
4. B) **divert** somebody's attention
5. C) **sluggish** economy/growth/demand
6. C) **shrewd** businessman/judge
7. A) **ample** time/space/parking

8. C) **outrageous** prices/behaviour
9. B) **ominous** warning/sign/clouds
10. death-defying C) **stunt**

6 Exercise 6: Dragon Ball Z Scene Comprehension

1. **suckers** — Vegeta calls them easily fooled people
2. **lurking** — Frieza's men have been lurking around the villages
3. He says he's not **sluggish** like them — he's been alert and watching
4. **Outrageous** — Frieza's demands for mercy are excessive/shocking
5. **Divert** their attention — make them think they're going east while circling back
6. **ponder** — Vegeta says he's had ample time to ponder this strategy
7. **defiant** — describes his body language when he refuses to run
8. **shrewd** — Gohan calls the plan shrewd, showing good judgement

7 Exercise 7: Register & Formality

Part A: Formal vs. Informal Contexts

1. B) ponder

Why: "Ponder" is more formal and literary, appropriate for business presentations. "Think about" is too casual, "check out" is slang.

2. B) suckered

Why: "Suckered" is informal slang, perfect for casual text messages. "Deceived" and "beguiled" are too formal for this context.

3. C) sluggish

Why: "Sluggish" is the standard economics term for slow growth. "Slow" is too basic, "lazy" is informal and personifies the economy inappropriately.

4. C) lurked

Why: "Lurked" has sinister connotations perfect for fantasy writing. "Waited" and "stayed" are too neutral and lack atmosphere.

Part B: Word Pairs — When to Use Each

5. ponder vs. think about

"Ponder" is more formal/literary, implying deeper, prolonged thought. "Think about" is everyday usage, neutral register. Use "ponder" in writing, formal speech; "think about" in casual conversation.

6. ample vs. enough

"Ample" is more formal and emphasizes generosity/abundance (more than sufficient). "Enough" is neutral and just means sufficient. "Ample parking" sounds professional; "enough parking" is conversational.

7. defiant vs. stubborn

"Defiant" implies active resistance against authority—often heroic or dramatic. "Stubborn" is more neutral/negative, suggesting unreasonable inflexibility. A rebel is defiant; a child refusing vegetables is stubborn.

8. ominous vs. scary

"Ominous" is literary, suggests foreboding about future events—atmospheric and sophisticated. "Scary" is casual, immediate, and often childlike. "Ominous clouds" is literary; "scary movie" is everyday speech.

8 Exercise 8: Listening Comprehension Prompts

Reader's Script — Read These Aloud

If you are the reader/teacher, use this page to read the sentences aloud. The listener should write down the vocabulary word they hear.

Part A: Single Word Identification — Full Sentences to Read

1. "The complexity of the human brain is absolutely mind-**boggling**."

Answer: **boggling**

2. "Someone was **lurking** in the alley behind the restaurant."

Answer: **lurking**

3. "She's been holding a **grudge** against him since high school."

Answer: **grudge**

4. "The economy has been quite **sluggish** this quarter."

Answer: **sluggish**

5. "He made a **shrewd** investment decision that paid off."

Answer: **shrewd**

6. "There's **ample** evidence to support the theory."

Answer: **ample**

7. "The sky looked **ominous** before the hurricane hit."

Answer: **ominous**

8. "She remained **defiant** despite the pressure to conform."

Answer: **defiant**

Part B: Dictation Practice — Full Sentences to Read

Read each sentence twice at normal speed. The listener writes the entire sentence.

9. **Read:** "The guerrillas ambushed the convoy near the mountain pass."

Key word: **ambushed** — past tense, note the -ed ending

10. **Read:** "I need more time to ponder this difficult decision."

Key word: **ponder** — base form after "to"

11. **Read:** "Don't let them sucker you into buying unnecessary insurance."

Key word: **sucker** — informal verb, note double consonant

12. **Read:** "Are you acquainted with the new safety regulations?"

Key word: **acquainted** — note the "acq-" beginning

— HARD EXERCISES —

9 Exercise 9: Trap Sentences — Spot the Misuse

1. "I need to **ponder** quickly about what to order for lunch."

Error: "ponder quickly" is contradictory

Why: "Ponder" implies slow, deep, prolonged thought. You cannot ponder "quickly" — that defeats the word's meaning.

Better: "decide quickly" or "think quickly"

2. "The cheerful music created an **ominous** atmosphere at the birthday party."

Error: Semantic contradiction

Why: "Ominous" means threatening/foreboding. Cheerful music creates the opposite effect. The sentence contradicts itself.

Better: "festive" or "joyful" atmosphere

3. "After drinking three cups of coffee, I felt very **sluggish** and energetic."

Error: "sluggish and energetic" are opposites

Why: You can't be sluggish AND energetic. Coffee typically makes you energetic, not sluggish.

Better: "alert and energetic" OR remove "sluggish" entirely

4. "She **lurked** openly in the middle of the crowded plaza."

Error: "lurked openly" is contradictory

Why: "Lurk" means to hide secretly, wait in concealment. You cannot lurk "openly" — that's impossible by definition.

Better: "stood" or "waited" openly

5. "He made a **shrewd** decision by investing all his money in a random cryptocurrency without research."

Error: Action contradicts "shrewd"

Why: "Shrewd" means showing good judgement. Investing randomly without research is the opposite of shrewd — it's foolish.

Better: "reckless" or "foolish" decision

6. "The obedient student was very **defiant** and always followed the rules."

Error: "defiant" contradicts "obedient" and "followed the rules"

Why: "Defiant" means refusing to obey. An obedient, rule-following student is the opposite of defiant.

Better: "compliant" or "cooperative"

7. "We had **ample** time—only 30 seconds to complete the entire exam."

Error: 30 seconds is not "ample"

Why: "Ample" means more than enough. 30 seconds for an entire exam is extremely insufficient, not ample.

Better: "barely any time" or "insufficient time"

8. "The soldiers launched a surprise **ambush** by marching openly down the main road in broad daylight."

Error: Open marching contradicts "ambush"

Why: An "ambush" requires hiding and surprise. Marching openly in daylight eliminates the surprise element entirely.

Better: "attack" or "assault" — or describe hiding before the ambush

10 Exercise 10: Error Correction

1. sluggishly → **sluggish**

Explanation: After "felt" (linking verb), use an adjective, not an adverb.

2. lurked → **lurking**

Explanation: Present perfect continuous requires -ing form: "has been lurking"

3. defiantly → **defiant**

Explanation: "Look" is a noun here, requiring an adjective modifier: "a defiant look"

4. grudging → **grudge**

Explanation: The expression is "hold a grudge" (noun), not "hold a grudging" (adjective)

5. acquaint → **acquainted**

Explanation: "Become acquainted" requires the past participle adjective form

6. amply → **ample**

Explanation: "Time" is a noun, requiring an adjective modifier: "ample time"

7. ambushed on → **ambushed**

Explanation: "Ambush" is transitive; no preposition needed: "ambushed the convoy"

8. pondering → **ponder**

Explanation: After "to" (infinitive marker), use base form: "to ponder"

11 Exercise 11: Translation & Production

Part A: English to Portuguese (Model Answers)

1. A complexidade **alucinante/espantosa** do universo continua a surpreender os cientistas.
2. Ela guardou rancor/mágoa contra ele por anos após a discussão deles.
3. As nuvens ameaçadoras/sinistras sugeriam que uma tempestade terrível estava se aproximando.
4. Ele era **astuto/sagaz** demais para cair na lábia enganosa de vendas deles.
5. O governo tentou **desviar** a atenção pública do escândalo.

Part B: Portuguese to English (Model Answers)

6. He felt very **sluggish** and heavy after the meal.
7. The guerrillas **ambushed** them near the bridge.
8. I'm not personally **acquainted** with her.
9. There is **ample** free parking available.
10. Someone was **lurking** in the shadows.

Part C: Sentence Creation (Model Answers)

11. **pester**: My little brother kept pestering me to play video games with him until I finally gave in.
12. **defiant**: Despite the teacher's warnings, the defiant student continued to use her phone in class.
13. **sucker (verb)**: The scammers suckered elderly people into giving them their bank details.
14. **stunt (noun)**: The motorcycle stunt in the James Bond film required months of practice.
15. **outrageous**: The restaurant charged an outrageous \$50 for a simple salad.

12 Exercise 12: Advanced Reading & Analysis

1. Irony with "shrewd":

The irony is that Marcus *considers himself* shrewd, but the story immediately reveals he was "suckered" — the opposite of shrewd behaviour. The author sets up the reader's expectation with "shrewd" then subverts it, highlighting Marcus's overconfidence and the gap between self-perception and reality.

2. Connotation of "lurking":

"Lurking" has predatory, sinister connotations — it suggests something hiding with malicious intent, like a predator waiting for prey. This foreshadows that the con artists will "attack" (scam) victims. The word choice immediately signals danger and sets an ominous tone.

3. Marcus's emotional/physical state:

Two words: "sluggish" and "ominous" (thoughts). "Sluggish" shows his physical depression — lacking energy, unable to move forward. "Ominous thoughts" suggests dark, threatening mental states. Together they reinforce total loss — both physical vitality and mental wellbeing have been destroyed.

4. Family reactions comparison:

- Marcus: **sluggish**, uncertain, **acquainted** with failure — passive, defeated
- Wife: holds a **grudge** — focused on resentment toward the con artists
- Daughter: **defiant** — actively resistant, optimistic, refusing to accept defeat

The vocabulary shows three different coping mechanisms: depression, anger, and resilience.

5. "Outrageous" — positive or negative:

Negative in context. While "outrageous" can sometimes mean impressively excessive (like "outrageous fashion"), here it means *unbelievably unrealistic/suspicious*. The 300% returns were so outrageously high that they should have been a red flag. The word emphasizes that the offer was too good to be true — anyone less greedy would have recognized the warning sign.

End of Answer Key

Score Guide: EASY (1-3): 0-30 points — MEDIUM (4-8): 31-70 points — HARD (9-12): 71-100 points